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# HISTORY OF PROSTITUTION INDIA

[ ANCIENT—VOLUME I ]

BY  
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&  
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WITH AN INTRODUCTION BY  
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## INTRODUCTION

The authors have done me much honour by asking me to write an Introduction for this volume of their "History of Prostitution in India" which is to be published *seriatim*. The interested reader may well anticipate to see it completed in altogether three volumes, the first of which only is now ready for publication.

In a sense, a request of this kind has not come to me as a surprise. About a decade back I had the misfortune of incurring the displeasure of rejecting a thesis dealing with the subject of Prostitution in Ancient India, for no other reasons than that the information supplied was inadequate and the treatment was unsatisfactory. Now I have a great pleasure in commending the present work on the History of Indian Prostitution to the class of modern readers who are or may be interested in the study of so delicate and important a subject as the institution of Prostitution, which has persistently defied, through many centuries of men's past, all campaigns of the social puritans against it.

I am aware that I have gained some amount of public notoriety for an interest evinced by me both in the study and cautious handling of the peculiar socio-economic and moral problem arising from rapid increase in the number of prostitutes open or covered, as well as traffic in women and children in Calcutta and other Municipal areas throughout Bengal and other Provinces of India. The acuteness of the problem has come to be felt also on account of a powerful advocacy of the cause of fallen women by certain writers of modern novels, Indian and European. This advocacy or appeal through the novels has not been viewed without fear or suspicion by the custodians of society and of public morality.

Upon the whole, the impression in this country is that such an advocacy has just served or is serving to encourage sexual immorality and corruption in all its nudity and shamelessness instead of restraining it or evolving a healthy moral sense from within. Those who are for leaving the institution undisturbed fondly quote

the opinion of so sane a jurist as the late Sir Guroodas Banerjee who is known to have considered it as a moral safety-valve to the social organism as a whole. There are others like Mr. J. N. Basu who would place much reliance on a piece of legislation in coping with the monstrous growth of the social canker within and without, and in improving the general moral tone.

Neither tolerating it as a moral safety-valve nor placing undue reliance on a piece of legislation, I felt that the best way to ensure a healthy growth of modern society, stopping all its possible leakages, lay in—(1) legalising by all means, even by the semblance of law or a show of ceremony, all known connexions of love or of passion ; (2) disposing of young widows who are unprotected or helpless honourably in marriage, or anyhow letting them know that they can be so disposed of if they are not unwilling ; and (3) founding in suitable places all over the country separate homes for the protection, education and vocational training of helpless mothers burdened with the care of children, of widows unprotected and helpless, of fallen women who are old and hagged or are sick of their open profession of shame and ugliness as well as of those unfortunate women who have been dragged by force or misled by clever tricks and are thus stranded.

I refer to these modern agitations for the simple reason that the present work is a notable outcome thereof and is not to be appreciated without keeping them in constant view. Thus it goes without saying that the motive which has actuated the authors to undertake so onerous a task as this is scientific and laudable, the obvious purpose of their work being to furnish all of those who are interested in the welfare of humanity in all its aspects, whether here or elsewhere, with reliable information and data gathered from all the available sources.

In this volume the authors have tried to bring the history down to the third or fourth century A. D., marking the beginning of the reign of the Imperial Guptas. They have sought to follow and work out a chronological scheme from the earliest times and have adopted a literary nomenclature for the periodical divisions which is more or less an arbitrary one. Much may be said for and against this cut and dried scheme. The Vedic hymns and

the general Vedic literature are wanting in sufficient information about Prostitution or internal morals of the ancient society. They, nevertheless, represent an extensive literary and cultural background with many useful accidental hints as to the internal forces of both good and evil, of virtue and vice and the contact and fusion of various races, tribes and clans serving as a great factor of social amalgamation. An insight into that background is indispensable to any work on India aspiring to be historical. It is with the side-lights from the corpus of Vedic literature that one has to watch how different social, legal, moral and educational institutions were shaping themselves.

In connexion with the Vedic, precisely as with the subsequent periods, the authors have been concerned, not without some strong reasons on their side, to show that the commercial intercourse with some of the western peoples was accountable, to an appreciable extent, for the prevalence of certain modes of sexual and social vice otherwise unknown to the people of this country.

For a systematic history of Prostitution in India, the term 'Epic Period' has a real meaning, and it all depends on the discrimination that we are able to make between the contents of the earlier Vaiṣampāyana rescension presupposed by Pāṇini's grammar and some of the Grihya Sūtras on the one hand and those of the later Sauti or Pauraniki redaction presupposed by the Gupta inscriptions on the other. It may safely be assumed that the Epic in its earlier form was a great book of poetical ballads and historical anecdotes with the preponderance of importance attached to the chronicles of two ruling clans, namely, the Andhaka-Vrishnis or Yadus and the Kurus or Kuru-Pāṇdavas ; the contents of this earlier book of *Itihāsa* were in many respects similiar to, if not identical with, the Pali Canonical book of 500 Jātaka-ballads. These two powerful clans, as appears from both the lines of evidence, were united by matrimonial alliances. It is also evident from both as well as from contemporary literature that Krishna-Vāsudeva and Baladeva of the Yadu clan and Judhisthira and Arjuna of the Kuru clan were great popular heroes sufficiently deified to be worshipped as divinities by distinct groups of devotees or worshippers.



The references utilised by the authors in the chapter dealing with the Epic period are all culled from the Great Epic itself without any prejudice to the Hindu religious sentiment and veneration for the lofty character of Krishna and Arjuna evoked by the eternal teaching of the Bhagabat Gītā. I, for myself, can say that the authors have not unduly exaggerated any part of the evidence of the earlier or later Epic. Anyhow the evidence, in so far as it bears upon the subject-matter of their work, is to be judged in its purely literary or historical setting and apart from any personal consideration. The prevalent customs and usages governing the life of the ruling clans and warring nations are the main point for consideration.

It is from such a definite historical back-ground that the authors have proceeded to build up a connected narrative of the rise and development of Prostitution in its technical sense, and to acquaint us with all the various laws and measures adopted by the leaders and reformers of antiquity either for the regulation or the stoppage or the minimisation or the humanisation of the commercialised sexual vice. Here they have felt no dearth of materials from both Indian and foreign sources, which they have copiously drawn upon. Here, their treatment of the subject is happy, thorough-going and, I should say, satisfactory.

From the fourth century B. C. onwards till the beginning of the reign of the Guptas, India was not a country in isolation ; her foreign interests grew by leaps and bounds racially, commercially as well as from the point of view of religion, art, culture, morals and politics. It pleases me, therefore, to note that the authors have not spared pains to give us an insight into what was happening during this time among the Greeks, the Romans, the Persians and other civilised or semi-civilised races around.

There need not be any reason for regret that the evidence of the Jaina canon has not been accorded a separate treatment. For, after all, this evidence, as will appear from Mr. Amulya Chandra Sen's monograph *Social Life in Jainism*, is merely corroborative of the information supplied from the Epic and Buddhistic sources. It has materially nothing new to add.

The Deccan and Ceylon separated from the North by the

Vindhya range and the Godāvari have not as yet found a proper place in the treatment of the present Volume. The social history of these two places bristles with interest and, as I am given to understand, it is reserved for special treatment in the second Volume. But it may be well anticipated that all the occasional glimpses that we have from references either in the two Sanskrit Epics, or in the Kāmasutra or in the Jātakas and Avadānas or even in the Pali chronicles of Ceylon, go to show a picture of social and sexual life which is anything but bright and happy. In the Rāmāyana, Sūrpanakhā is held out with her cunning looks and aggressive offers of love as a type of female beauty among the Rākshasa princesses. In the Pali Valāhassa Jātaka and its Sanskrit version in the Divyāvadāna, the regional coast of South India is described as Sirisavātthu (Srisavāstu), a flourishing place which was an emporium of inland and foreign trade. Whenever any ship-wrecked merchants happened to be there, the savage-looking and voluptuous women of the place approached them, naively offering them to be their wives and saying that they were all the more welcome, because they were sea-farers like their husbands. The Kairalakis or women of Kerala were considered along with Māghadakīs as rare beauties worthy of princely enjoyment.

The Yakshinis of Ceylon of savage fame cut a similar figure in the Pali chronicles of old.

In drawing any reasonable conclusion from the various references utilised in this work, the reader or the critic must leave sufficient margin for vilifications, exaggerations, underestimation, misrepresentations due to social, cultural, communal, local and caste prejudices,—in short, to hearsays and ignorance. It is gratifying to find that the matter has not escaped the acute observation of the authors and that they have not failed to warn the reader against this false step in judgment.

It will seem equally necessary to distinguish between what is put forward as a theory and what is presented as a fact. In the Epic tradition, for instance, Rishi Dirghatamas and Svetaketu are credited with two successive measures of codified law, the earlier measure insisting on the loyalty of the wife to the husband as

long as he is alive under all vicissitudes of life, in the later measure insisting on loyalty on both sides, male as well as female. It may not be historically correct that such measures were actually adopted or enforced by the persons named. The references are important, nevertheless, as setting forth circumstances under which some of the Hindu people would normally think like that. In other words, all that is important is expression of the views apart from personal equations.

The authors seem perfectly justified in drawing a line between sexual immorality or promiscuity on one hand and prostitution in its technical sense on the other. The former may be, in fact, is, as old as man ; the latter is not so. As the authors have inclined to postulate, prostitution as a profession or institution started from a set of peculiar circumstances. The clear hint in the great Epic and some of the Purāṇas is that prostitution as such was just a further step from concubinage, which was a super-abundant luxury with the princes and aristocracy. Concubinage arose as a female status in a royal harem out of the condition of slavery to which all female captives of war were indiscriminately reduced.

Concubinage in a royal harem had in those days a twofold vicissitude to encounter : (1) Promotion to the rank of a queen or even that of a queen-consort under special royal favour or to that of a queen-mother under popular sanction in the event of the deceased king having no male issue except one by a concubine ; or (2) degeneration into the professional career of a prostitute in the event of a concubine being stranded for want of protection and help, generally after the death of the king. Open to royal concubines as well as to those among the ancient aristocracy was initiation into different religious orders ; and even the ordinary courtesans and prostitutes were not debarred from this privilege.

In addition to the passionate and helpless female captives and royal concubines and the girls born of them who formed primarily the trophies of war and gifts of peace or alliance, there was another fountain-head of courtesan life in India. Among some of the Republican clan, notably the Vrijis or Lichchhavis of Vaiśālī forming a powerful confederacy of eight clans, a handsome

girl was considered a public property. She was required by usage to be brought up as an accomplished courtesan, having an easy access to the royal courts and pleasantries of aristocracy. The *ganikās* of this class were expected to be of unsurpassed beauty and accomplished in singing, dancing, acting, instrumental music and other literary, pleasing and fascinating arts, as distinguished from the prostitutes from the first source who were chiefly used as agents for the gratification of sexual lust. This class of princely courtesans felt their usefulness generally as trained agents for the satisfaction of the erotic sentiment of joy and the æsthetic enjoyment of the life in its fulness, and occasionally as spies in state service. The Jaina canonical texts attest that the state or the community maintained regular institutions for training up these courtesans.

Among the masses of Indian people, civilised or otherwise, prostitution as a commercialised vice did not gain ground until at a late period when the charm and glamour of court-life and paradise fascinated them. Thus, historically viewed, prostitution descended gradually from the high to the low to spread its contagion and network all over the country.

Going by the testimony of Vātsyāyana, one may, perhaps, say that prostitution in the sense of a professional woman entertaining several visitors at the same time or in quick succession by way of satisfying their sexual lust was rather an exception than a rule. The reprehensible practice is distinctly associated with Bāhlika and Strīrājya, evidently of North-West frontier notoriety. From the stand-point of moral hygiene the ancients used to think that the prostitute at her best was the concubine at her worst.

In the normal life of the ancient society, whether favouring monogamy, polygamy or polyandry, whether patriarchal or matriarchal in its character, the sexual life was chiefly governed by the consideration of the necessity for the perpetuation of the line by procreation of children and descendants. Need of procreation was keenly felt, and the Brahminical propaganda went so far as to give a permanent divine sanction to it. The feeling created was so deep and of lasting effect that the community as a whole was inclined to tolerate or to connive at or even to recognise all kinds

of sexual aberrations if these proved conducive to that single end in view. The death of a reigning king without a male issue was so much an object of dread to the people that pressures were brought from all quarters of opinion, responsible or irresponsible, to bear upon the judgment of the ruling prince to secure anyhow a son to succeed him, even relaxing with impunity all ordinary rules of sexual morality, decency and purity,—with the saving clause—during a time-limit fixed for the purpose and under religious sanction—(*Dhamma-nāṭaka* as Pali “Kusa-Jātaka” calls it).

These and other sundry points of importance have been relevantly discussed in this work, which, I am sure, will serve as a sufficient food for serious reflection, and above all, as an incentive to further researches in this field. The thoughtful reader will have sufficient reason to be thankful to the authors for preparing a connected and comprehensive History of Prostitution in India. They may be readily excused for certain inaccuracies in spellings and diacritical marks in transcribing some of the Sanskrit and Pali words.

I have little doubt that this work will act as an eye-opener to many who idealise the past overlooking the embarrassing circumstances that shaped the destiny of man and woman in their social and sexual relationship, and as a book of reference to those who are trained to adjudicate upon facts as facts.

THE UNIVERSITY OF  
CALCUTTA  
6th September, 1933. }

B. M. BARUA

## PREFACE

We are fortunately living at a period when a serious attempt is, for the first time, being made all over the world to control, regulate and if possible, to eradicate all the commercialised vices that are eating into the vitals of humanity. An intensive and systematic propaganda against traffic in women and children has formed one of the permanent activities of the "League of Nations" in pursuance of a paragraph of the Covenant, the Article 23-C which states that the members 'will entrust to the League the general supervision of the execution of agreements with regard to traffic in women and children'.....The Tenth Assembly in 1929 decided that an enquiry should be extended to the Far East, and with the princely donation of \$ 125,000 contributed by the American Bureau of Social Hygiene, a small committee was appointed for the purpose. The Commission of Enquiry visited the East including India and Burma in 1931 and in due course submitted to the League its valuable report which has since been issued to the public.

The social reformers of India, too, have not remained indifferent to the gravity of this growing evil; and during the course of the last few years at least four Provinces have made better provisions for combating this menace by the passing of Suppression of Immoral Traffic Bills. Most of the Provinces and Native States of India are facing, though in a far lesser degree than America and the Western countries, the double evil of prostitution *per se* and the traffic for prostitution. Humanity must be thankful to those men and women who have been making an honest and sincere attempt to ameliorate the condition of the unfortunate victims to human lust and monstrous avarice, and to blot out this standing blotch to civilisation.

The Bengal Social Hygiene Association was started a few years back with the above objects in view, and has ever since its inception been attempting in its humble way to help this mighty

cause. But the workers were naturally confronted with many difficulties in their way, among which the paucity of any connected history of Prostitution with the past experiences of our reformers in this line can be cited as a fundamental one. Only the following of modern western methods was not deemed sufficient to cope with the situation here, and the Association keenly felt the necessity of a workable knowledge of the previous records of the Indian prostitute, her favourable environment, peculiar traits, customs and traditions, and the old provisions of law either for her protection or for her efficient control. It was chiefly to help the Association and other organisations of similar nature in India with such a study that we undertook to write a serial work on this delicate but important subject from the earliest times of Indian history down to our present age.

Prostitution, as we have sought to show, has in India as in every other civilized country a distinct history of its own. In order to understand the place of prostitution in our existing system and to cope more successfully with this ancient evil, it may well repay a perusal of this history so that one may look back to its inglorious past and carefully analyse all the facts and factors that have gone to give an incentive or modify this ignoble "sale of the sweet name of love". Unfortunately a lack of adequate knowledge of the prostitute's past life, her present psychology and her future possibilities, as well as an appalling ignorance in the laws and circumstances under which she has dwindled or thrived in different ages and climes, has given rise to a oppositionist school which would wax indignant at any endeavour to solve this vital social problem and fain remain cynically reticent on it.

Prostitution is almost as old as human civilisation. India which justly pretends to a most ancient civilisation of the world, presents us with an extensive account of the rise and development of prostitution here. Like its cultural history and political chronology, the latter is sometimes wrapped up in obscurity and at other buried in allegorical legends and traditional folk-lore, not to speak of the many materials that could furnish connecting links to the antiquarian being lost through the inadvertence of ages or

remaining still unexplored. We have tried with our limited efforts to trace Indian prostitution to its fountain-head and to show as a result of our enquiry at which point of social evolution it became inevitable, and how it passed through many vicissitudes to assume its present form and amplitude.

We have also endeavoured to chalk out a morphology and an etiology of prostitution, considering all the while that it has been an infectious social malady breaking out in an epidemic form under varying conditions and diverse aspects, and leaving our more advanced brethren in a position to think out for themselves its prognosis and a course of rational and cautious treatment.

Many modern Anthropologists and Sociologists have proved not without reason that prostitution is an essential constituent of the whole marriage system as it appears to-day and was the indirect result of the gradual development of the family on a patriarchal and mostly monogamic basis. It is for one to consider whether it may be accepted as a premise with which to work out the problem with any hope of success.

The social reformer can ill-afford to ignore another truth that the world with regard to licentiousness and looseness of morals has greatly changed its angle of vision, if not materially progressed. Many aspects of prostitution and its attendant evils may appear to us to have of late greatly increased, but the reader must not lose sight of the fact that the population, means of publicity and communication, and transformation of economic conditions have increased still in greater proportion. Though it is difficult to compute with hair-splitting exactitude how much sin or crime has decreased since the "good old times", it is easy for us to determine that it has made away with much of its crudities, boldness and pervasiveness. In our present volume, we have endeavoured to furnish our social and religious reformers with some trustworthy records of the past of a civilised humanity so as to enable them to proceed cautiously and judiciously in dealing with the embarrassing problem of prostitution of modern society without any undue bias for a cherished past, or with any prejudice against the immediate present, the immoral expressions of which are apt to be often unduly exaggerated or unjustly condemned.



It needs must be mentioned here that in one view, the institution of prostitution is the creation of a set of men born with a superabundance of sexual passion and a society dominated by males who have utilized the noblest and handsomest handiwork of God not for the harmonious reciprocation of love, but for the satisfaction of their savage lust. Man, since the dawn of civilisation, has, by dint of his higher physical capacity and a stronger intellectual acumen, tried with a vengeance as it were, to project his wanton sexual nature on the character of women. While erecting a strong fencing of moral integrity around his own hearth and home, he wanted to abandon himself to the most shameless caresses of a set of women, who would hire out their bodies at all times for some sordid gain. This desideratum went a long way in setting up the institution of prostitution which, eventually in the interest of a higher demand of civilisation, was branded by many with a hot iron of infamy and accredited by some as "safeguard to the chastity of matrons and maidens".

We should bear in mind that an important school of thought considers that the immorality of the male sex goes to make at once the exciting and predisposing causes of this professional fornication, and as such, prostitution is described as mainly a man's question. The ancient law givers of India were quite alive to this side of the problem, and in their authoritative codes we find an attempt to put more check on the male advances than on the female surrender; and they were never blind to the truth that by preserving the moral dignity of the man they could successfully prevent a wretched degradation of the woman. The question of complete eradication of this system did not trouble the thought of the then social potentates of India by whom it was considered to be both a useful institution and means of satisfaction of a definite biologic need; and this opinion has been recently repeated by the highest authorities on this subject in Europe and America. But that they, nevertheless, attempted a systematic regulation of the prostitutes and aimed at the relentless suppression of slave-traffic and abduction of minor girls for immoral purposes, is evident from the details of Kautilya's "Arthaśāstra" and some other Samhitās codified about this time.

When Solon was laying the foundation-stone of a palatial public brothel in the very heart of Athens amidst a pompous state ceremony, it may be said to the credit of India that she was seriously thinking about the means and method of how best to combat this fell pestilence of social life. It saw the operation of Immoral Traffic Laws in right earnest long before the Julian Law or Justinian codes were given birth to in another part of the civilised world. Segregation in the modern sense of the term on the basis of regulation and conscription was unnecessary in India, as syphilis was unknown in any country of the old world before the fifteenth century.

The movement of segregation had its inception in Europe about the year 1878 not so much from a sense of morality as from the necessity of combating with the infection of that obnoxious disease. The ancient Indian savants, perhaps both from moral and hygienic considerations, were often in favour of exercising some sort of segregation in regard to the habitation of the prostitutes, and accordingly their quarters were frequently confined to the southern extremity of a town like the German *Kasernierung* or *Dirnenquartiere*. The aim of the present generation, however, is not only regulation and segregation as we understand them now, but ultimately the eradication of this evil root and branch from the society;—a very noble idea indeed if it succeeds !

Whereas new factors are daily arising to make the problem of present-day prostitution more complex and less easy to solve, yet another danger threatens us from quite unexpected quarters. It is clandestine prostitution, which, under many decent but alluring garbs, has been plying a roaring trade. Over and above this have arisen a class of women, we mean, ladies, who have revived the traditions of conventional freedom of the earliest matriarchal society and who have chosen to forget all the true attributes of motherhood. Many of them are displaying in public a levity in their dresses, manners and movements, which can hardly fail to lead them to evil courses. Post-war psychology seems unfortunately to have revolutionised the whole idea of our time-honoured morality and tends to give

a far wider scope to the adolescents in their sexual relationship in its varied aspects.

In western countries while they are fighting tooth and nail with prostitution *per se*, reputable girls have been taking "a leaf out of the unprintable diary of the prostitute and have with brazen courage equipped themselves with the tricks and technics and modes of self-display which belong by long historic right to the *filles de joie* whom H. G. Wells once graphically referred to as the 'painted disasters of the street'." One need not be a cynic but only a realistic analyst to remark that these 'painted disasters' may not one day preclude our own daughters and sisters. By the weirdest of ironies, the triumph of the whores seems to mark the downfall of prostitution. If an attempt at the eradication leads to situations as described above, God save India from such a solution of the problem !

Nowadays many social dignitaries with a newer trend of thought want the normal sex-instincts of man to be suppressed and the time-honoured Darwinian destiny to mate to be arrogated to the Freudian doom of sublimation. But we should keep in view the fact that the female population is preponderating the male and the economic necessity causing the postponment of marriage of many young men and girls; besides this, the old-time religious beliefs and faith in monogamic purity are fast declining, inadequacies and maladjustment of married life are widely felt and the knowledge of birth-control is available to all. As long as these factors remain, we are unable to imagine how and when that millennium will come with conditions favourable to the complete eradication all forms of prostitution—open or secret, professional or amateur.

One must pause here to think over again what Parent-Duchatelet uttered in pious conviction about a century ago: "With prostitution itself it is as with vice, crime and disease; the teacher of morals endeavours to prevent the vices, the law-giver to prevent the crimes, the physician to cure the disease. All alike know that they will never fully attain their goal; but they pursue their work none the less in the conviction that he who does only a little good, yet does a great service to the weak man."

We should not further expatiate here as elsewhere in our work on the merits and demerits of the question of eradication. Here we are just concerned with presenting a faithful picture of Prostitution in India—past and present, its causes, claims and relation to the wider aspects of social life, with the relative laws enacted from time to time, in the fervent hope that this will not be without some advantage to our social reformers in achieving the object of its elimination or regulation in a more effective and humane way.

We must acknowledge our heartfelt gratitude to those authors and editors from whose books and journals we have often drawn inspiration and more often incorporated materials freely, and to our numerous friends but for whose encouragement we could not perhaps have made a sustained effort. We are particularly indebted to Mr. J. N. Basu and Mr. K. C. Chowdhury, members of the Legislative Council, Bengal, and Messrs A. Chatterjee and S. Ghose of the Publicity Bureau of the League of Nations for a keen personal interest evinced by them in our work. Our grateful thanks are due to Prof. B. M. Barua of the Calcutta University for writing a valuable Introduction for our book and also to Prof. R. P. Choudhury of the Judson College, Rangoon, and Prof. A. C. Vidyabhusan of the Vidyasagar College for some valuable suggestions kindly offered by them.

Calcutta :  
Dated the 10th  
September, 1933. }

S. N. SINHA  
N. K. BASU

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# HISTORY OF PROSTITUTION IN INDIA

VOL. I











SĀDIKAM SAMMADAM TURAM DEVĀNAM

— An opera of the gods—

A jovial performance by the heavenly courtesans.

## CHAPTER I.

### THE VEDIC AGE

It is an admitted fact that prostitution, as we understand it to-day, is a product of civilisation and a by-product of the marriage-institution. The earliest history of every civilised nation testifies to the existence, and often abounds in the description, of this oldest profession of the world. India, the seat of ancient civilisation is no exception to this rule, and its Epics depict in striking contrasts the various phases of the human society. Here in the sequestered forest, the holy recluse buries himself in the deepest meditation, lives piously cut off from all the material amenities of the world, and strives after a stainless life of chastity ; whereas in cities, often the best king or the mightiest warrior freely abandons himself to the voluptuous caresses of his concubines and the most winsome courtesans of his day. If the *Rāmāyana* and the *Mahābhārata* contain beautiful descriptions of the best type and embodiment of perfect womanhood, if *Sitā* and *Sābitrī* gave the world the highest ideal of monogamic purity and feminine fidelity, it is also in these books that we find the immense power of the charms of *Rambhā*, *Urbaśī*, *Menakā*, and a host of other celestial nymphs, who could frustrate the penitential vows of even the most austere sage. Truly the ancient Hindus have frequently sung the praise of public women, but there is nothing to prove that they supported untrammelled growth of hetairism in disregard of marriage ideals.

Before we commence a systematic study of Prostitution in India from the times of the Epics, we shall take our readers back to the pre-historic times, the times of the Rigveda which records in a rudimentary way and with obscure allusions the manners, customs and culture of the Aryans from time immemorial down to about 2000 years before Christ. The composition of all the Vedas must have, therefore, extended over a considerable period ; and modern Geological, Archæological and Ethnological investigations have almost definitely proved that they are the oldest history of human civilisation available, if we may call them history at all. In respect of style and historical character, the first Veda has been compared by some European scholars to the "Psalms of David" in the Hebrew scriptures.

As every reader of ancient Indian History knows that the Vedas chiefly contain hymns and psalms offered to the different gods, and to these were afterwards appended original prose formulæ for the performance of certain rituals. The Atharva Veda, which is no doubt a production of a comparatively later period, chiefly deals with "potions, drugs, spells and incantations of black magic commensurate with the belief in evil spirits current among the lower strata of the society". In the Yajurveda moral elements in religion have been extinguished by an elaborate and complicated system of ceremonials which no longer served as a means of worship but an end in itself. Not only does it show the four great social divisions hardening into a distinctive caste system, but a number of mixed or sub-castes forming different strata of the society. The metres, language and subject-matter of the hymns and litanies of the different Vedas themselves clearly prove that the period of their composition was far too extensive to be treated as one, and comprised several thousand years in its compass, showing the gradual evolution of the most ancient civilisation of human history.

Prof. Macdonell observes that the contents of the Rigveda are mostly mythological, and to some Orientalists, largely allegorical. They attach, however, much importance to this mythology, not only that it affords a glimpse into the early growth and development of the pre-historic Aryans, but that "it represents

an earlier stage of thought than is to be found in any other literature. It is sufficiently primitive to enable us to see clearly the process of personification by which natural phenomena developed into gods\*." The student before he aspires to penetrate into the remotest and darkest regions of the Indian History, must have to equip himself with this torch-light of knowledge that the Vedic cosmology came to postulate the existence of certain divine beings or spirits that ruled over the different elements and phenomena of nature and also presided over the destinies of mankind. There were bards and sages called *Munis*, *Rishis* etc. like the Druids of the pagan Europe; they guided the nation in their gradual evolution towards ethical, metaphysical and cultural perfection. These Rishis who were the intelligensia of the body-politic, took up the role of instructors and ultimately became the Brahmins when caste-system came to prevail in the society. It was the Rishis, who as proto-types of national aspirations, discovered in course of time, the use of metal implements, various art-crafts, manifold devices of agriculture and industries. It was they who taught their pupils the different branches in art (*kalā*) and science (*viज्ञान*) and initiated them into the mysteries of the worship of different gods.

All forms of ancient religion had a common platform where they could meet and join hands; but Aryan faith from its very inception chalked out a distinguishing path of its own, which, of course, some other pagan nations tried haphazardly to follow, and it attained, in course of development, a stage favourable to the growth of the highest form of pantheism and panpsychism. When the early Aryans, casting off their nomadic propensities, settled down as agriculturists, they had naturally to look forward to the onset of regular rains, and jealously to protect their corns from the ravages of the draught, inundations, birds, beasts and thieves. When they saw that the regulation of the natural phenomena was beyond the control of themselves or their clan-chiefs, they thought that there must be some supreme being, a

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\* Macdonell's *History of Sanskrit Literature*, P. 67.

mysterious divine power, which was supposed to control the elements. Their prolific imagination led them to believe in the existence of a community of super-natural beings—the *Devas*, the chief among whom was called *Indra* (Zeus or Jupiter), the God of the sun, rains and clouds.

It was chiefly for the propitiation of this Indra, the God of gods, that the Rishis composed so many hymns and ignited the sacerdotal fires. But the mere chanting of *mantras* was not considered sufficient for His invocation ; so some sort of sacrifice was introduced—sacrifice of something which they valued or esteemed. That is why clarified butter (*ghee*) in plenty and domestic animals like cows, sheep, horses etc. were consigned to the flames. The sacrificial rites were accompanied with a mild intoxicating drink, the juice of *Soma*-plants. If the gods were propitiated and the people reaped a fairly rich harvest, sacrifices in honour of them were celebrated with the greatest eclat, in which Soma-juice was drunk in plenty, and at the end of which there was probably a manifestation of unrestrained promiscuity.

But promiscuity cannot be called prostitution, especially if there be no marriage-institution existent in the society. In the opinion of P. Nacke, H. Schurtz, I. Bloch and other trustworthy authorities on sexual anthropology, a state of sexual promiscuity did actually prevail in the beginning of all human development ; but it lasted a short time only to be followed by a kind of semi-promiscuity. And this state of semi-promiscuity gave rise to what is loosely known as group-marriage on one hand and polyandry on the other, which no doubt arose from a deficiency of women in a totem. This led to the establishment of mother-right or matriarchal society. Before the origin of marriage, even in the great freedom of sexual intercourse, there had certainly been a rudimentary sort of family-tie and the formation of a more or less enduring sex-companionship which, of course, ultimately developed into the nuptial bond. After this, promiscuity was only resorted to on special occasions, such as in religious or political celebrations, when the rule of comparative abstinence was more or less deliberately tempered by the permission for temporary

outburst of licence\*. Such were the states in the earliest Rig-vedic society.

In the times of the later Rik and Yajurveda we find marriage institution an established fact. But, of course, it took hundreds of years for the institution to pass the elementary stages and attain some sort of perfection. In order to substantiate the proposition that prostitution is the by-product of marriage-institution, it is now incumbent on us to acquaint our readers with the eight forms—rather stages of marriage through which the Vedic society gradually passed and all of which, at one time or other, came to be recognised by it.

Sexual union of two persons or *more* (as in polygamy or polyandry), temporary or permanent, having one of its chief objects the procreation and care of the offspring,—an union that is sanctioned by the society through the performance of a definite ceremony, is called *Marriage* by modern Sociologists. The social potentates of the early Aryans, sometime after they had asserted their patriarchal spirit, tried to stem the tide of sexual relationship to a monogamous channel ; but that was not an easy task to accomplish. The kings and priests for a long time thereafter framed, but seldom enforced, strict laws of monogamic marriage. Everywhere there were, as there still are, numerous instances of sexual variations of monogamy. Even in highly cultured societies we find vast number of men living *de jure* a life monogamy, but *de facto* in a polygamous state. As James Hinton argued and Prof. Ellis supported that rigid marriage order involves prostitution ; whereas a flexible marriage order largely, though it may not be entirely, renders prostitution unnecessary †. No doubt, there was laxity of marriage laws, though not of general moral codes, during the Vedic age ; so prostitution or sexual intercourse outside marriage was seldom felt necessary. Contemporary society could only sanction polygamy to the abnormally sexual man and polyandry to the highly passionate maiden.

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\* *Marriage* by E. Westermarck (Earnest Benn publication) p. 7 ; and *Studies in the Psychology of Sex* by H. Ellis, Vol. VI. p. 218.

† *Studies in the Psychology of Sex* Vol. VI, p. 502.

Now to the eight forms of marriage of the early Aryans :

(1) RĀKSHASA VIBĀHA\*—marriage by capture. This form of marriage was always attended with the forcible abduction of a maiden from her home by a man, married or unmarried, while she wept and her relatives had been wounded in offering resistance. Marriage by capture existed in early Palestine, Greece, Rome, among the Franks, the Norman races, the Mediæval Turks and the Slavs. The rape of the Sabine maidens by the primitive Romans is well-known to the students of History. "Rape-marriage" though a highly criminal offence in modern era, was an innocent pastime with the ancient Teutons. But whereas in other countries the maidens were mostly captured, whether in peace or war, merely for an ephemeral pleasure, or to be detained as slaves or concubines at the most, the Aryans dignified the affair with a marriage form to palliate the grave injustice done to the girl and her rightful guardian.

(2) PAIŚĀCHA VIBĀHA—marriage by persuasion or perfidy. In this form of marriage, the girls were generally decoyed with various gilded hoaxes, and were compelled to marry after having been ravished in their sleep, in an unwary moment or under the spell of some intoxicating drink. Consent of the two parties, however, was not always necessary.

(3) ĀSURA VIBĀHA.—In this form, marriage-contract was made between the bridegroom and his prospective father-in-law in lieu of some consideration, money or some presents. This is otherwise known as 'marriage by purchase'. It could only be introduced when woman completely enslaved, had fallen to the position of a mere chattel. The consent of the guardian of the bride-elect was, of course, always necessary.

In this way, the rich people began to purchase and maintain as many wives as they liked, whereas the poor could not procure even one. The Rishis had also their forest-homes packed up

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\* If we look into the derivative root of the Sanskrit word *Vibaha* (marriage), we shall find *Bi-baha*, meaning to carry carefully away. In the very root of the word is embedded the history of primordial marriage.

with scores of wives. So, the indigent man was often forced to purchase a wife as a co-sharer with his elder or younger brothers or some of his nearest relatives. This mode of polyandry which arose out of purely economic reasons, must be distinguished from that of the matriarchal period which rested on a natural and non-individual basis. The practice of patriarchal polyandry sometimes found way into a Royal household, not of course on economic reasons, as we shall find later. Draupadī, the daughter of the Pāṇchālā king, for instance, was given away in marriage to the five Pāṇḍava brothers.

Polyandry is still practised among some tribes residing in the Himālayan regions, Thibet, Coorg (Mysore), Bhutan and the Annamalai Hills in Travancore. The sale-marriage, however, was not unknown in Mediæval Europe. The Anglo Saxon's *bewedding* was nothing but a contract of bride-sale. The custom of wife-purchase crept into the Roman and Byzantine societies during the sixth century A. D. from its Teutonic birth-place\*.

(4) DAIVA VIBĀHA—The daughter was given away to the presiding priest of a sacrifice. In this way the Rishis were uselessly burdened with too many wives, while the parishioner youth pined away for a suitable companion in life.

(5) GANDHARVA VIBĀHA—was a marriage by mutual consent of the intending bride and bride-groom, but without the express sanction of the society and a solemn ceremony. The only conventionality observed in its performance was that the parties changed garlands with each other, promising in the name of God to be thenceforward faithful to the nuptial bond. It was often done in a trice, as a result of love at first sight.

(6) ĀRSHA VIBĀHA—was the outcome of Āsura marriage. It was, no doubt, attended with a ceremony and presided over by a priest who required the bridegroom to give the guardian of the bride a pair of milch-kine in lieu of the latter's transfer of rights. Among the Santhals, Mundas, Oraons,

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\* *History of Matrimonial Institutions* (3 Vols).—G. E. Howard, pp. 259, 386.



Kols and other primitive tribes of India, Ārsha Vibāha is still in vogue. It is also found in some Abyssinian tribes, the Hottentots and other Australasian aborigines.

(7) BRĀHMA VIBĀHA—in which the Brahma i. e. the priest without being a bridegroom himself, acted as the match-maker. After concluding negotiation with the guardians of the prospective groom and bride, he united the couple in front of a sacerdotal fire as a solemn witness. In Brāhma Vibāha, however, there was no question of consideration or present from either party.

Here we might mention that in later times, another form of marriage called *Svayamvara* cropped up in the families of Chiefs and Rājās. According to the Svayamvara form, the full-grown educated daughter of a king came forward before an assembly of marriageable princes and made the choice of her husband from among them at her free sweet will. Instances of Svayamvara marriage are profuse in the times of the Mahābhārata and rare during the Middle ages. It fell into discredit, as it often entailed a long-drawn strife between the fortunate prince and the disappointed candidates and also an enormous expense on the part of the host.

(8) PRĀJĀPATYA VIBĀHA—was a polished form of Brāhma Vibāha. In it the guardians of the prospective bride and bridegroom judged on the merits and demerits of the match, and the consent of the bride and the groom was always taken on the eve of marriage. The rich father of the girl always furnished a dowry for her daughter, and the father of the bridegroom or the groom himself contributed a quota to it which formed the alimony of the wife and could not be wrested from her by the husband or his relatives, under any circumstances. As coins were invention of the later Vedic age, originally utensils, trinkets or some gala-dresses went to form the dowry. This form of marriage was always, as a rule, attended with a sanctimonious ceremony in which the marriage-*mantras* from the Sāma or Jajurveda were read by the pair and the two contracting parties before the sacerdotal fire. Only Prājāpatya Vibāha in a somewhat modified form is extant in modern Hindu society. In the lowest strata of the society, however, extenuated forms

of *Brahma* and *Gandharva Bibaha* are sometimes found. *Sanga* marriage of the lower class Hindus, is undoubtedly the precursor of 'companionate marriage' which has of late been a craze in the ultra-modern West.

In some time or other of the long Vedic age, more than one form of the above eight kinds of marriage were the order of society. If the marriage laws were at anytime strict or ludicrously utopian, the exponent of the laws never admitted of their stout enforcement. But society required every member within it, to observe some sort of marriage sacrament, when he was grown up enough to set up a household for himself. The Rishis enjoined that a man was half the entity as long as he remained single,\* and nobody should keep company or share the dining table with an adult bachelor. This was, we may assume, an un-fascistic form of the Bachelor's tax, now found in Mussolini's Italy.

Endogamy was not widely patronised in Vedic times, although the widow was allowed to get herself married with her brother-in-law. In Rigveda we find in the 10th Mandala (40th Sukta, 20th Rik) that the lady author *Ghosa* says, "As a widow draws her brother-in-law unto her bed, as an affianced attracts her lover to her side, similarly, who pulls you back to your home?" ...In a later period, the law-giver *Manu* also endorsed the marriage of widows with their brothers-in-law †. Eighteen centuries before Christ, we find the same regulation in force among the Hebrews. Judah, the fourth son of Jacob, had married in succession to a daughter name Tamar two of his sons—Er and Onan. These sons dying without children, Tamar promised to wed their last brother Shelah.

The cult of chastity and invariable marriage morals were creations of the later Vedas, more probably of the Brahmana period. Dirghatama whose name occurs so often in Rigveda was most likely not the same Rishi who is described

\* Vide *Atri Samhita*, 2/50 and also *Vyasa Samhita*, 2/14.

† Vide *Manu Samhita*, 9/69-70 & R. C. Dutta's *Commentary on the Rig-Veda*.

by the Epic authors as being maker of the law of chastity for women, under a tragic circumstance. The story will be enumerated in its proper place. It is not hard to conclude that a society in which women were highly estimated by and equally educated as men and where reigned a wide catholicity in marriage laws, would hardly suffer any room for the sprouting up of prostitution. There might have been debaucheries, worst forms of promiscuity or betrayals of the conjugal couch on saturnalian days, yet there was no prostitution, we mean, legal prostitution, finding a market for goods which the law does not condemn and which the custom of the land authorizes. When a woman abandones herself in obedience to the dictates of her heart and the natural attractions of the flesh to a man, either in wedlock or outside, be it for life or for a moment, that is love—that is pleasure. That cannot strictly be called prostitution which always weighs, calculates, negotiates and bargains. If we call this love, prostitution, then we shall have to go back to the origin of mankind—to the very cradle-bed of human society.

That there was a class of dancing girls even in Rig-vedic times can be surmised from the word *दृगुरिष* occurring in several places of this thesaurus of the earliest Aryan civilisation.\* It may, on the other hand, be contended that the word does not imply dancing girls as a professional sect in the community; it might be that the unmarried girls or the ladies of the enfranchised harem of the period, danced on special occasions as the Roman matrons danced and sang publicly on *Floralia* or *Feast of Fool* days, and as the females of the aristocratic families in Java and Bali still do. The concubinage relationship was probably not in demand, after marriage institutions were firmly established. The 6th Rik, in the 95th Sukta of the 1st Mandala, was perhaps essayed during the time when the idea of marriage was not yet wholly crystalised. This sloka runs thus: "They (*Dyaba* &

\* "अथि पेशांसि वपते दृगुरिषापीरुते वक्ष उक्षेव वरुहं ।"

(1st M. 92 S. 48 R.) i. e. She (*Usha* or dawn) like a dancing girl puts on her valuable jewelleries and as a cow yields her udder (at the time of milking), so she bares her bosom."

*Prithivi*) caress him both like two kind and beautiful women; like lowing cows they have approached him in their own way."

Now we must turn our attention for a time to Indra, the Lord Supreme of gods and men, and to Soma, the popular drink of the time. The Soma drink has been in vogue in primitive Aryan society before Indra was born, in other words, before He was conceived and acknowledged as the supreme Deity. Hence some audacious Rishi went so far as to place Soma above Indra, and they argued that the former was called *Jajnasya Purva* i. e. older than the institution of sacrifice. It has been related that Indra when born of His Divine Mother developed an inordinate desire for Soma drink even before he thought of sucking his Mother's breast. Such as it was, it was quite likely that dissension ensued among the various clans of the Aryans over the supremacy of Soma and Indra.

In a subsequent period, a long-standing feud took place between two contending parties, one professing Agni (Fire or *Jatavedah*: the fire-god *Brahma*) and the other upholding Indra to be the paramount God. Another party soon arose with the cult that the sun-god *Mittra* (identified with *Vishnu*) was the greatest God of Vedic hierarchy. Thus we see that Indra was always the bone of contention; and his followers came off with the flying colours at the end of every contest. This difference of religious opinion and practices sent many of the Aryan tribes adrift into other parts of the world, a branch of which formed the prehistoric Indo-European stock, and another Indo-Iranian stock, who were called *Asuras* (Assyrians) by the *Sapta-Sindhu* Aryans.

From time immemorial, there were two distinct divisions between the conquerors and the conquered: the Aryans and the primitive non-Aryans—Kolarians and Dravidians. Some of these non-Aryans were nomadic savages constantly at loggerheads with the new-comers; lifting their cattle and stealing their corns. They were denominated as *Dasyus*, *Danavas*, *Rakhsasas* etc.; and when subdued, were taken into the Aryan society as *Dasas* or Plebians. They were originally animists,

phallic worshippers and nude culturists. Though these conquered non-Aryans professed *Indra* as the supreme God-head and superficially accepted the Vedic system of belief and practice, they remained still at heart wedded to their pristine form of faith.

The Dravidians, though not fair-skinned like the Aryans, were not behind-hand in material civilisation, and sometimes their military genius was superior to that of the Aryan aggressors. They were also animists like their less civilised brethren and marriage institution had not taken shape in their society during the Rig-vedic age. They worshipped tree and serpents as well as Phallos and *Yoni* as the supreme manifestation of the creative force in nature ; and it was in their patriarchal settlements that we may reasonably expect to find the first dawn of guest prostitution. These Dravidians were as much free-spirited as the Picts and Scots of yore and could never be brought to subjection by the Aryan nation. They retired to the mountain fastnesses of the Deccan and preserved their independence, till the Epic age, when Aryan culture and colonisation broke for ever the monotony of their characteristic social customs.

But thousands of years before that, in the halcyon days of Rigvedic culture, the *Panis*,\* a tribe of the Aryan stock, a class of merchants who traded both on land and sea, formed a vague connecting link between these two rival cultures. The Panis constructed large frigates and sea-going vessels, were good carpenters as well as expert mariners. They had naturally to look for the raw materials of ship-building to the dense forests of the Central Provinces and the Deccan. But their business instinct was vitiated by a propensity for piracy, till some of them formed a so-called "South India Company" to establish better trade relations with the Dravidians—relations which were not always peaceful or unsophisticated. These Panis have been described in the Rig-veda†

\* From *Pani* might have been derived the four words of almost the same connotation : *Pana*, *Apan*, *Banika*, & *Bipani*.

† *Rigveda*, M. VIII. 66, 10 & also M. VI. 20, 4.

as extremely parsimonious, selfish, devoid of reverential sentiments and greedy like wolves. Most of them were very rich, and some were village usurers and others lived by pillage and plunder. Moreover, they did not subscribe to the Vedic faith; neither did they accept Soma and Indra as the supreme Deities, nor did they forsake their marauding habits. Maritime people that they were, they created *Varuna* (God of all terrestrial waters) their supreme Divinity, and afterwards, commensurate with their war-like spirit, added *Bala* (God of valour) to their characteristic cult. That the tenets of Indra and Soma were not subscribed to by some other cultured people of the vast Aryan community, it has already been mentioned. That the very existence of Indra, whether in heaven or earth was being doubted by some free-thinking sages, can be deduced from more than one *Riks*.\* The Rishi *Nema* grumbles: "There is no Deva of the name of Indra. Who has seen him? Whom shall we offer our hymns to?"

These fair-skinned Panis, as dissenters from the orthodox faith, were also looked upon as *Rakhsasas* and as *Dasjus* and were being put to constant persecution. But it brought an wonderful solidarity amongst them and they were openly or secretly patronised by the revolting Rishis and the Plebians. *Rik* 8 of the 22nd Sukta, 10th Mandala, says—"We live in the midst of the *Dasjus* who do not perform sacrifices, who do not believe in any God. They have their own rites and are not entitled to be called men. O Thou Destroyer of enemies, annihilate them and extirpate the *Dasas*". Probably in order to embitter the schism all the more, and to win popularity with the lower classes, they took to some sort of animism, phallic worship, weird ceremonials and black magic, the insidious and all-pervading influence of which afterwards went to lay the foundations for the *Krishna Yajurveda* and the *Atharva Veda*.

In their commercial transactions with the Dravidians, the Panis must have come in contact with guest-prostitution which was the prevailing custom among many South Indian tribes. Even down

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\* Vide *Rigveda*, M. VIII. S. 190. R. 3.

to the first decades of the twentieth century, this form of family prostitution has been in vogue among some of the *Malayalam* speaking people of South Canara and Annamalai Hills. Curiously enough, it was in Southern India that the religious prostitution also appears to have first originated. The students of Comparative Ethnology of the ancient world will find that guest-prostitution has always been the precursor of religious prostitution, and where one has cropped up, the other is sure to follow.

Now, the Panis were not slow in absorbing this vicious custom of the Dravidians, as if in exchange of what they gave to the latter from their culture and creed. It will not be too much to presume that the Panis with their higher endowments, refined guest-prostitution into a religious one. Gradually this new faith of Varuna and Bala ensconced in lecherous revelries became such an unendurable menace to the pure Aryan culture, that the die-hard Patricians could find no other alternative than to rise up in arms against these blasphemous practices and the abominable votaries themselves. A cruel and bloody war ensued in which the Panis and their adherents could fare no better. Atlast a great many of the Panis who survived the ravages of battle were ousted from *Sapta-Sindhu* and *Brahmavarta* (i. e. the eastern portion of Afghanistan and the Punjab, and the western portion of the Gangetic plain of North India).

These outcasts probably took shelter in the kingdom of the Dravidian Cholas and gradually got incorporated in their community. While a few Panis who were made captives or subdued in the war, ate humble pie and were re-admitted into the parent community by the observances of *Vratrya-stoma*\*. But the religious aberrations of the Panis never died ; it was only suppressed to manifest itself at times under, of course, a more decent garb. That the orthodox Aryans themselves in the course of time tolerated these practices to a certain degree and even substantiated them, can be proved by quoting many passages from

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\* Vide *Tandya Brahmana*.

the *Atharva Veda*. One of these practices was human sacrifice (specially children) at the consecrated alter. In *Aitareya Brahmana* (VII. iii) of the Rigveda we come across a Brahmin lad by the name of *Sunahshepha* who was about to be sacrificed to Varuna, the water-god, by Raja Harischandra, when the god himself appeared there in person and released the victim.

The dislodged Panis who had taken refuge in the Malabar and Coromandal coasts with their goods and chattels, gradually regained their former prosperity. The Dravidian Cholas and Pandyas who were not only great builders of cities and citadels, but almost as daring navigators as the Panis, must have freely intermingled with and imbibed somewhat distorted form of the Aryan culture from them. Phallic worship was greatly refined, and iconolatriy of *Shiva-lingam* was subsequently introduced. There remains little room for doubt as to whether the phallic worship was at all inaugurated by the Arayan liberals sometime or other during the capacious Rigvedic period, as soon as we come by the word *Sisnadevah* (god of the phallos) in Rik. 5, Sukta 21, Mandala VII. The student of Comparative Philology probably knows that the Greek word *phallos* is identified with the Sanskrit *pela*, both carrying the same import. As the bull was found to be the most virile and prolific amongst domestic animals, the Dravido-Aryans, in course of time, transferred the symbol of generative power in nature to the actual organ of the bull. This is how the bull came to have had a sacred bearing and been known as a beast of conveyance to *Shiva*. *Shiva (Rudra)* was the God of night and thunder—a primordial Bacchus, under whose peaceful regime, the voluptuous ceremonials were always conducted, and thus the God bore the synonym of *Brishadhwaja* (i. e. one who possesses the penis of a bull).

Now, the restless maritime instinct of the Panis, the Cholas and the Pandyas could never keep them stuck to their own shores. A band of Panis starting from the coast of Gujrat had already discovered the lands bordering the Persian Gulf and another vast tract of land as far as modern Cochin-China in the Far East. They tried, as much as they could, to reform the aborigines of these lands to their own interest and to create a demand for their



merchandise, till, either for some geological chaos, or for any political or social reasons, most of them migrated to the southern portion of modern Iraq, and established a colony near the mouths of Tigris and Euphrates. "Though thus removed far away from their mother-land, they must have kept up an intercourse with her coasts for a long time, mainly in the interest of their trade. The immigrants to Mesopotamia, appear to have left their new colony, after a long sojourn, not only because it was very poor in timbers suitable for ship-building, but also because they must have been ousted from occupation by the invasion of the Semitic hordes".\*

Where did they settle then? To the ancient Phœnicia (modern West Syria) on the coast of the Mediterranean Sea. According to Herodotus, the venerable father of Greek History, 'they formerly dwelt on the coasts of the Erythean (Arabian) Sea; from thence, they passed transversely across Syria and now dwell on the sea-shore'. "Here as timber for ship-building was found in great abundance, and the sea-board afforded them numerous safe harbours, they settled down and called their country Phœnicia i. e. the land of the Panis."†

Thus we find, several thousand years before Christ, the Panis, the so-called reprobate children of the Aryan parent stock, formed the powerful Punic races of the Western Asia and carried trade and spread Aryan culture, not only to the coasts of the South Europe, but to Britain and Scandanavia§. "It is a strange dispensation of God" says Prof. Das in his *Rig-vedic India* (pp. 194-195) "that both in the olden and modern times, the selfish and greedy merchants should be selected for the outspread of a particular civilisation in other lands. As the European merchants have paved the way for the spread of Western culture in Eastern lands, so did the Panis also helped to spread the culture of the East in Western countries in ancient times. Of course, none were actuated by altruistic motives or a missionary spirit to undertake this noble task".

\* *Rig-vedic India* by Prof. A. C. Das (1921) p. 134.

† *Ibid* P. 144.

§ Lord Avebury's *Pre-historic Times*", P. 61-62.

Now leaving the Panis where they are, we should go back once more to South India to follow up the fate of the Cholas, Pandyas and other Dravidian tribes.

Wave after wave of semi-Aryanised Cholas, Pandyas and others followed in the wake of the Panis and settled along the south coast of Mesopotamia and between the fertile plains of the Euphrates and the Tigris. They designated the new colony as *Chaldea* or *Chaldees*, the deteriorated form of *Chola-Desa* (the land of the Cholas), otherwise it may be a cryptic condensation of the two racial names Chola and Pandya. These Cholas and Pandyas or in other words, Chaldeans, having learnt long ago the art of agriculture from their Aryan neighbours and being deprived of a supply of ship-building teaks in this new colony, gradually forgot their old warlike and maritime habits and permanently settled on the land as peaceful villagers, though a minority of them retained a pastoral life. The Chaldeans and Babylonians had many ideas and institutions identical with, and not independent of, the Aryan culture, though in course of development, they made manifold alterations and innovations.

Prof. Ragozin has observed, "In the ruins of Mugheir, the ancient Ur of the Chaldees, built by Ur-Ea the first king of united Babylonia, who ruled not less than 3000 years B. C. was found a piece of Indian teak. It grows in southern India where it advances close to the Malabar coast, and nowhere else".\* This Ur in Chaldea, was the country of Abraham, famous in Old Testament, and it was in this place that the Hebrews originated and finally migrated to Palestine. So they were also a product of the Chola-Pandya blood. The word *Ur* is distinctly Dravidian, as it is appended to the names of so many places of South India to-day ; such as, Mahish-ur, Connur, Chitt-ur, Warai-ur, Cuddal-ur etc.

Prof. A. C. Das is of opinion that hordes of Panis, Cholas and Pandyas also colonised Egypt and were the standard-bearers of Aryo-Dravidian civilisation there. He has also very ably

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\* Ragozin, *Vedic India*, pp. 305-6.

and rationally proved in his research thesis\* that the great Aryan stock was autochthanas in Sapta-Sindhu (the Punjab, a portion of Kashmir and Afghanistan), that the Dravidians came in close apposition with the Aryan culture not only through the Panis, but by the great sage Agastya and the sons of Rishi Biswamitra, and that the corporation of Panis, Cholas and Pandyas carried Aryo-Dravidian refinements to Egypt, Babylonia, Palestine and other parts of the Asia Minor, establishing the principal nationalities of the ancient world, and paving the way for Greco-Roman civilisation.

But every civilisation has its froth and dregs like even the best-made beer. And the Aryan civilisation was not an exception to it. Call prostitution what you may—froth or dregs of the society, traces of it could be found in South India during the Rigvedic ages in the form of guest-prostitution and religious prostitution, though the word 'prostitution' would be almost a misnomer here in as much as they were founded not upon any business instinct, but upon the strange religious belief of the people. During the later Vedas, they were possibly elaborated through an adhesion of the Aryan and Dravidian nations, and these customs were carried to Chaldea, Babylonia, Palestine, Syria, Egypt and other colonies. These customs were all the more consolidated on one hand and refined on the other, by the Aryo-Dravidian emigrants, in as much as they were completely cut off from the constantly opposing conservative elements and could give free rein to their fantastic imageries. This permanent segregation from the parent stock, the climatic influence, the new environments and the contact with the indigenous aborigines, of course, with the advance of time, wrought wonderful changes in their customs, manners, languages and the succeeding evolution of their national lives. But these ancient nations, have left enough materials in their literature and archeological remains to enable the ethnologists to indentify them as the adventurous and discarded children of the Rigvedic Aryans and their Dravidian neighbours.

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\* *Reg-vedic India*, pp. 567, Calcutta University Publication, 1921.

The estoteric side of the Vedic sociology and religious observances have not yet been properly unearthed and placed on a solid historical basis. So the student who cannot belie the ancient irradiation of Aryo-Dravidian civilisation, should have, in the meantime, to accept this much hypothesis that the frightful forms of religious and guest-prostitution that were carried on in ancient Egypt, Babylonia, Chaldea, Phœnicia and other countries, must have had their root in the Indian soil, and that they must have prevailed in some, if not all, of the Aryo-Dravidian tribes, in their nascent stages.

The paramount divinity of the phœnicians was Bāal, which was no doubt *Bala* of the Panis. Varuna, instead of Indra, had already been placed by these Panis in charge of the sky or heaven as well as ocean, and in Phœnicia, he became known as *Auranos*. In speaking about the Phœnicians the erudite writer in the *Historians' History of the World* says, "In religious doctrine they were more receptive than productive. As their life was so permeated with the mercantile spirit, they placed their divinities in direct relation with appearances of practical experience and desecrated the deep doctrines by material significations, by lasciviousness and by cruel practices.\*"

The cult of Bāal or Indo-Aryan Bala was imbibed and improved upon by the neighbouring Midianites who again propagated it amongst the Hebrews about the time of Moses. Bāal was represented sometimes by a gigantic phallus and sometimes by an idol with its robe drawn above his head, "as though to reveal its turpitude." All archaic scholars are agreed on this point that sacred prostitution formed a chief element of this odious cult. All women who visited the temple had to sell virtue to any strangers they liked and to deposit a portion of the money on the divine altar.

The earliest Venus of the Phœnicians was called *Urania* which again nicely accords with Varuna of the Aryans, this beautiful Venus Uranios being the daughter of the great Ocean-god. She was probably married to the Sun-god and was

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\* *Historians' History of the World*—Vol. II., p. 354.

also called *Astarte* which is none other than the condensed form of उषा and लक्ष्मी (the one denoting 'dawn' and the other 'wife of the Sun').

Temples were dedicated to the Goddess Astarte ; the most famous were those of Heliopolis and at the foot of Mount Lebanon. Astarte was represented first by a female organ of generation and subsequently by a naked female statue with signs of both the sexes. This mixture of two sexes representing creative force in nature, was reduced to a most shameless burlesque by the men and women who freely mixed with each other in the nocturnal festivities of the deity. Monstrous promiscuity took place under the cover of darkness, at the direction of the effeminate priests, and to the sound of musical instruments. The Phœnicians, to boot, if the testimony of Eusebius can be relied upon, prostituted their virgin daughters to strangers, to the greater glory of antiquity.\*

In Chaldea and Babylonia guest-prostitution and sacred prostitution went hand in hand for centuries together, till one overlapped the other. The Summerians who founded Babylonia not less than seven thousand years before Christ, were a mixed race of the Aryans and the Dravidians.† Their supreme God was *Ea*, who received oblations under the form of a serpent. *Ea* was no doubt *Ahi* (serpent) of the Aryo-Dravidians who thus symbolised the mother earth.

The name of the Babylonian Venus was Mylitta who, we suspect, was imported from Southern India. Now we must quote Herodotus here to depict the frightful custom that centred round the temple of Mylitta. "Every woman born in the land is obliged, once in her life to repair to the temple of Venus to give herself to a stranger.....One sees lanes separated by ropes which have been stretched. The strangers walk up and down this lane to select women to their liking. When a woman has taken her place in this lane, she is not permitted to return

\* *History of Prostitution* by Paul Lacroix, p. 21.

† Vide *Ancient History of the Near East* by H. R. Hall, Chap. V. pp. 172-3.

home until some stranger has cast silver upon her knees and has had intercourse with her outside the sacred place. However modest the sum, it cannot be refused nor it is permitted her to repulse anyone. Finally when she has acquitted of what she owed the goddess, by abandoning herself to a stranger, she returns home. After that whatever sum is offered, it is not possible to seduce her. Those who have an elegant figure and beauty do not remain long in the temple, but the ugly ones sometimes remain three or four years."\* It will not be too much to presume that a microcosmic replica of this practice had been in existence in southern India among many tribes of the Cholas, Pandyas and Cheras, probably not as a general, compulsory observance, and that this practice of waiting in the temple-compound to fulfill the vows of God, must have given birth in the Pauranic ages to the custom of *Devadashis* who like the vestal virgins of pagan Rome, were dedicated for life to the temple of gods and though it was required of them by stern medieval law-givers to live in strictest purity, took to prostitution *sub rosa* in the name of religion. We shall speak more of these Devadashis in the subsequent volume of our work.

This sacred prostitution together with guest-prostitution permeated through all the Semitic tribes of Asia, including the Caanites, Maobites, Mediantites, Lydians, Phrygians, Cappadocians Hebrews etc. Phallic worship was the rule with almost all the societies in Asia Minor. Thus we see, "Phallic emblems for averting evil were plentiful; even the summit of the tomb of Alyattes is crowned with an enormous one of stone about 9 ft. in diameter".†

It was in Egypt that sacred prostitution attained the highest peak of perfection. The principal dieties of the Egyptians were Osiris (Sun) and Isis (Earth), like Indian *Shiva* and *Shakti*, who were, we suppose, first formulated by the Dravidians. Bull was sacred to Shiva as well as Indra, and curiously enough to the Egyptian Osiris also. Horse, goat and calf-sacrifice

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\* Herodotus, BK. I. I. 99.

† *Historians' History of the World*, Vol. II p. 434.

on divine altars were much in vogue in Egypt as in Vedic India. The cult of Osiris and Isis which we need not discuss here at length, gave rise to universal debaucheries within and outside the temple. The priests, the self-made plenipotentiaries of the gods, apart from the regular worship of them, took as their duty to initiate the neophytes of both sexes into the material mysteries of Cupid.

An annual fair was held in the neighbourhood of the temple where about seven hundred thousand pilgrims gathered to abandon themselves to incredible lechery. But prostitution was forbidden inside the temple proper; and according to Herodotus, "the Egyptians are the first, who out of religious scruples, forbade one to enter holy places after having had commerce with women and without having been washed clean". In Pauranic ages, in India, we find strict injunction of abolution before visiting a shrine. The Egyptians were quick to outstrip the stage of guest-prostitution and to pass over into the legal prostitution with all its primitive naivete. Even about 2500 years before Christ, we find in Egypt, a set of courtezans who maintained, down to 400 B. C., a reputation of possessing incomparable talents for satisfying irreconcilable human lusts.

At the fag-end of the long Vedic Age, we find, in India also, the rising of a similar class who trafficed in their virtue and were protected and authorised by the laws of the land. This was what we may call the birth of legal or real prostitution.

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## CHAPTER II.

### THE BRAHMANIC PERIOD & THE EPIC AGE.

The illustrious Eliphinstone in his *History of India* observed not of course without reason that in Indian History "no date of a public event can be fixed before the invasion of Alexander". Professor Cowell, the renowned editor of the fifth edition of Eliphinstone's monumental work, commenting upon this statement remarked that the dictum almost holds good throughout the whole of Hindu Period and ended by saying that "It is only at those points where other nations came into contact with the Hindus that we are able to settle any details accurately." But during the last ninety years, the researches of a multitude of scholars on Indian antiquities have much weakened the foundation of Eliphinstone and Cowell's proposition and have enabled us to determine with approximate accuracy many important dates before the invasion of Alexander, "sufficient for most purposes".

The historian who attempts to throw light upon the remotest past of any nation, must first of all recognise the intrinsic value of and be content with relying, to a great extent, upon the traditions and hearsays as embodied in its ancient literature ; though there is no gainsaying the fact that the results of historical researches when based upon traditionary materials, are inferior both in certainty and authenticity to those obtainable for periods of which the facts can be or have been attested by contemporary



evidence Truly, in India, with a few outstanding exceptions, contemporary evidence of any kind is lacking before the invasion of Alexander.

Even contemporary evidence, in the opinion of such stout historians like Vincent A. Smith, cannot be accepted without criticism or scepticism. "The flattery of courtiers" Smith remarks,\* "the vanity of kings, and many other clouds which obscure the absolute truth, must be recognised and allowed for. Nor is it possible for the writer of a history, however great may be his respect for the objective fact, to eliminate altogether his own personality". And lastly the learned historian opines: "Indian history has been too much the sport of credulity and hypothesis, inadequately checked by critical judgment of evidence, or verification of fact; and 'the opinion of the foreman', to use Goethe's phrase, cannot be implicitly followed."

European scholars, wilfully or inadvertently, have done a great injustice to Vedic and Epic chronology. From the time of Max Muller down to that of Prof. Rapson, they have decidedly shown short-sightedness in the estimation of Vedic and Epic Ages and in assigning rational dates to them. Max Muller in his introduction to *Rigveda Samhita*, most arbitrarily and unwarrantably affixed the dates of the earliest Veda to be 1200-1000 B. C. and those of the other Vedas to be 1000-800 B. C.. Buhler, a faithful disciple that he was of this adept maker of mystic chips of the sacred East from a dingy German workshop, supported Muller's award of Vedic dates and has gone so far as to assert that the recapitulating portions of the Vedas (*Sutras*) were produced at best 150 or 200 years earlier than Panini, the great Sanskrit Grammarian who flourished probably between 400 and 300 B. C..

Then, there were other Orientalists, such as Dr. Hang (in his Introduction to the *Aitareya Brahmana*), Prof. Whitney (in his Introduction to the *Sanskrit Grammar*) and others who generously fixed the date of Vedic composition to be some

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\* *The Early History of India* by V. A. Smith. p. 4.

where from 2400-2000 B. C.. But Prof. Rapson, honourably occupying the Sanskrit Chair in the University of Cambridge, has lately outwitted all his predecessors by supporting Prof. Keith's views most unreasonably and without adducing sufficient proofs, that the civilisation of the Brahmana literature must have flourished between 800-600 B. C.\*.

The great Vedic Age may be precisely divided into four stages or periods ; the Chhandas, the Mantra, the Brahmana and the Sutra. But for our present purpose, we might be content with broadly dividing the age into two : (1) the Mantra Period or the period of the Vedas proper and (2) the Brahmana period, the period of the prose commentaries or the applied form, of the Mantras. In the preceding chapter, we have marked the beginning of the proper Vedic period indefinitely during the Neolithic age, as no human brain without any documentary evidence or any confirming remains or relic can fix the date with hair-splitting exactitude. Where the Whitney school has begun, we have ended there : in other words, we have closed the Mantra period at about 2400 B. C. which is followed, no doubt, by the Brahmana Period.

Recent excavations at Ur (South Iraq), Boghuzkoi (N. Iraq), Tel-el-amarna (Egypt), Mahenzo-daro (Sind), Harappa (Montgomery Dist., the Punjab), Lauriya Nandangarh etc. have upset all the conservative theories of the old Mullerian school and the calculations of Whitneys have been made superannuated. But long before this, Prof. Jacobi, Lokemanya Tilak and a few others tried in their own individual ways to fix the date of the Vedic Age from the internal evidence available from the astronomical data recorded in the Vedas. From these, the former has proven that the Veda-Mantras were composed from 4500 to 2500 B. C.† and the latter has shewn that the Rishis were inspired with them probably during the time between 6000 and 4000 B. C.§. The great

\* *The Cambridge History of India* (in 5 Vols.) Edited by E. J. Rapson M. A. Vol I. page 149 (the matter referred to has been written by Prof. A. Berriedale Keith, D. C. L., D. Litt.).

† Jacobi, Z. D. M. G. Vol. XLIX p. p. 218 sq. *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, 1909, pp. 721-6 ; 1910, pp. 460-4.

§ Tilak, *Orion*, Bombay, 1893 ; *The Arctic Home in the Vedas*, 1903.

Indian antiquarian Mr. Kameswar Aiyar, on the basis of constellary position of the Krittika Nakshatra, as noted in *Shatapatha Brahmana*, has, a few years ago, worked out the same result as Prof. Jacobi, and he conclusively proved that the age of the Brahmanas should be dated with much plausibility from 2300 to 2000 B. C.. Tilak had assigned 2500 B. C. as the time of Shatapatha Brahmana. Dr. M. Winternitz has been agreeable to this invulnerable theory and quashed with cogent reasons all the nicely-concocted hypotheses of the Buhlers and Keiths who have been trying always for reasons best known to them, to underestimate the chronology of ancient India\*.

We are, however, beginning the Brahmana period roughly from 2400 B. C., though it is difficult for us to determine with exact precision the time when it came to a close. Practically, all these periods over-lapped into each other and it is not possible for the students to allot a clear line of demarcation between any two of them. It is certain that a substantial portion of the Atharva Veda and some *mantras* of the Rik and Yajur-Vedas were composed during the Brahmana period. In the light of the modern researches of Mr. Aiyar and other Indian scholars on the line, we may fairly suppose that the Brahmana period ended somewhere between 2000 B. C. and 1800 B. C.

Now, a few words on the subject of prostitution in the Brahmana Age.

We have already spoken at some length about the colonisation of the Aryo-Dravidian adventurers throughout Persia, Asia Minor, Egypt and many lands in the Far West, during the Rig-vedic period. These settlers, in course of time, forgot, though not completely, their place of origin and their protogenal fathers, just as the Normans of Normandy once forgot that they originally belonged to Scandanavia or the Ottoman Turks that Central Asia was once their primitive abode. The influence of the native population, the climate and environment and other insuperable factors gradually alienated them from their motherland and wrought distinctive changes in their habits, customs, language and culture.

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\* Dr. M. Winternitz in his lecture on "The Age of the Veda" as published in *Calcutta Review*, November, 1923.

They retained, nevertheless, some of their pristine qualities and preserved atleast a trace of the Aryo-Dravidian culture with which they had once permeated the whole of Asia Minor, north Africa and dark Europe. That for many centuries together they kept up an intercourse with India mainly in the shape of maritime trade and even loved to christen their gods and men with Aryan names, has been adequately proved by the present day archeologists. Atleast one fact of interest can be adduced from the terracotta tiles recently exhumed at Boghuz-koi. These plates record the treaty between Subbilu Suma, King of the Hittites and Mittiuaja, King of Mittani (N. Iraq). Both of these kings lived in about 1400 B. C. In them occur invocations to some of the gods of the Vedic pantheon, such as, Indra, Mittra, Varuna and Nasatyas (two Aswinis).<sup>\*</sup> A few tablets among the excavations at Tel-el-amarna, have been identified as correspondence of some West Asiatic princes addressed to the Egyptian Pharaohs between 1470 B. C. and 1400 B. C. Curiously enough, all these princes bore Aryan names, one of them having subscribed himself as *Dasaratta* (Dasharatha).

Great Egyptologists like Heeren, after observing a striking resemblance to the skulls of the Egyptian races and Indian races of antiquity and wonderful similiarity in the manners, social customs, religious beliefs and observances of these two widely separated nations, went to suggest that "the Egyptians had one day been emigrants from India." Now, Menes (an altered form of *Manu* ?) was the first king who established dynastic rule about 4300 B. C. from which Egyptian history and civilisation are said to have commenced. Then it can safely be conjectured that the emigration took place long before this.

During the Brahmana period and even after, till their national deterioration, the Egyptians kept up direct or indirect relations (through the Phœnicians) with India. These two widely divergent branches of the same geneological tree—the Egyptians and Indians, not only exchanged peacocks, sandal-woods etc. with bars of gold and silver, but also newer thoughts and usages that

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<sup>\*</sup> *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, No. 35. pp. 722-23 (1909).

evolved in their respective societies. Mummies, three to four thousand years old, have been disinterred and found to have been wrapped up in Indian Muslin, proving the correlation of these two great nations. In the pyramidal catacombs of Tutan-Khamen several articles have been found out bearing remarkable resemblance to Indian type and character.

As India once bore in her soil the seed and plant of phallic worship which was carried over to other countries of antiquity by her emigrating sons, and around which gradually clustered the cult of virgin, the mysteries of Mylitta and different aspects of religious prostitution, similarly Egypt was the natal chamber of legal or real prostitution, shorn of all religious solemnity or personal romance. It was from Egypt that legal prostitution found way into India, sometime or other during the Brahmana period. No-doubt, the avaricious Phœnicians first hit upon the idea of placing sacred prostitution on a business pedestal and took up the question of personal lucre in the observance of a religious rite. Thinking it to be nothing better than a 'pious trickery,' the Egyptians in course of evolution divested it of all its quasi-religious apparel and put prostitution on a purely business basis.

In Brahmanic India, marriage morals were in the process of being highly refined and remodelled; the cult of chastity in marriage, virginal purity and ideal of strict monogamic life were being gradually established. The caste system had grown sufficiently old and was tending to become a hereditary institution. The lower forms of marriage were being circumscribed and greatly disparaged by the Aryan savants. It was enjoined that *Brahmins* ( the priest and instructor class ) should resort to Brahma and Prajapatya forms of marriage only ; the *Kshatriyas* ( the administrator and warrior class ) should take to Gandharva and Rakshasa forms, and the *Vaishyas* (the trader and farmer class ) ought only observe the Ashura form ; while for the *Sudra* ( the labour and the menial class ) both Ashura and Paisacha forms were recommended.

In the times of the Rigveda, marriage rules were of the simplest kind, confined to such ones as only prohibited union of brother and sister or father and daughter. The Brahmanas

strictly prohibited marriage with agnates or cognates, with any relations of the fourth degree ; they required that a man must marry within his own caste, otherwise, it should be into a lower caste, though these rules were sometimes taken exception to. Practically we find many instances of inter-caste marriage even in high life of the great Hindu society upto the end of the Pauranic age.

Disparity in labour and economic compexity in the society became for the first time manifest in this period. Bread-winning avocation weaned many people away from their cosy fire-side and peaceful village-life, and tempted them to plunge head-long into the "city's strife." Under these circumstances, it was inevitable that the Egyptian merchandise would find a ready market here, and prostitution should pass from the religious fete over into the deeper folds of society—into the people's everyday life and into the laws. And thence came legal prostitution which has since then been ruling society to be sometimes, of course, ruled over by it, which has regulated the destinies of so many historical figures, and which to this day, vainly vies with the well-established marriage institution.

The prostitutes were then called *Vishya*. Probably this class had been created originally to minister to the "Vish" or Vaishya caste (i. e. traders and merchants who mostly led a town-life cut off from their hearth and home) ; afterwards it was thrown open to all, and a fresh meaning as "any gentile" was added to the word "Vish".\* *Vishya* of the Brahmana period gradually changed into "*Beshya*", which lost its original derivative root and was framed from the root "*Besh*" (to enter, to decorate) and which meant 'one who is approachable to and by all' or 'one who nicely bedecks herself'.

Concubinage relationship showed its head at this period and it was thought to be a more chaste and tolerable form of adultery. Slave girls were not absent in the harems of the aristocracy. The kings sometimes, retained hundreds of slave

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\* Sj. Bijoy Chandra Mazumdar—"Vaidic Yugey Naree" published in *Bangaluxmi*, Jaistha, 1335. B. S.

girls in their palaces.\* Nevertheless, all of them were not recruited from the Sudra class and not all the Sudras were *Anasa* (flat-nosed) and dark-skinned. These slave-girls could dance and sing to perfection and learnt assiduously all the arts of *Isis*. Some of them satisfied the passing fancy of a gallant noble and others acted as concubines. The prostitutes as a class were not perhaps so despicable as they are in modern society, and offspring of illicit intercourse seldom forfeited their citizen right. The boy Satyakama who could tell nothing of his ancestry but that he was the son of the unmarried slave-girl Jabala, was cordially accepted as a pupil by that distinguished preceptor Rishi Gautama, because this young soul showed astounding candour, promise and perseverance.

The Brahmanas are not so keen about elucidating the life of the prostitutes, their habits, modes and manners and the laws regulating them. None the less, the Great Epic, *Mahabharata*, devotes a few pages to the metaphorical description of the so-called prostitution and moral laxity of this period and how Shwetaketu first formulated the principle of conjugal fidelity.

But before we pass on to the Epic Age, we would again of necessity tax our readers with a short discourse on the divergent opinions about its date. Every Hindu believes that Rama, the hero of the Epic, *Ramayana*, lived during the closing period of the *Treta* Age, and the great Kuru-Pandava War as depicted in the Epic, *Mahabharata*, was fought at the end or on the eve of the *Kali* Age. According to Hindu Almanac-makers, the Kali Age has just entered its 5033th year. So the *Mahabharata* war, according to their computation, came off one or two years before 3,101 B. C..

The Puranas, however, have ascertained that when *Kali Yuga* set in, Parikshit, the grand-son of Arjuna, the great epic

\* In *Shatapatha Brahmana*, we find the following passage (XIII. Kanda, V. Ad. ii. B.) :—

"When the victims (sacrificial horses) have been quieted, the (king's) wives come up with water for washing the feet, four wives and a young maiden and four hundred female attendants."

hero of Mahabharata, had begun his reign. From a passage\* in Vishnu Purana, it has also been found out that a little over 1000 years had elapsed between the reign of Parikshit and Mahapadma Nanda, who is supposed to have ascended the throne in or about the year 413 B. C.. So the Mahabharata War can easily be reckoned to have occurred sometime about 1450 B. C.. Mr. Pargiter in his *Dynasties of the Kali Age* has not been able to throw out this calculation as unsound, though he has been inclined to make 1100 B. C. as the proper age of the Kuru-Pandava conflict. We, however, accept the Pauranic view almost *in toto*.

In the opinion of Pargiter, Rama lived in the fifth century before the great war of the Mahabharata, while some modern Indian scholars echoing the hypothesis of Todd and others are reluctant to place the principal event of the Ramayana not much earlier than two to three hundred years before that of the Mahabharata†. So 1800 B. C. can with no less plausibility be assigned to the age of Rama. Whatever may be the age of the central themes of the two Epics, many European scholars are of opinion that they were written long after the events, and the length of these tremendously heterogenous works requires the assumption of several centuries for its completion as they now exist. Moreover, the Ramayana has been denominated by them as a second Epic which, to their mind, "stood as the type and origin of the refined one-author poem; and whatever may have been the date of its germ as an art-product, it is later than Mahabharata‡".

The European scholars, even going so far as to violate every known principle of historical criticism and with a prevaricating heart, has manufactured the ill-considered theory that the Epics were composed between four and three centuries before the

\* यावत् परीक्षितो जन्म यावन्नन्दाभिषेचनम् । एतद् वर्षं सहस्रान्तु त्रयं पञ्चाशद्वत्स॥  
(V. Pr. 4th P. 24th Chap.) Some text has read पञ्चाशद्वत्स as पञ्चदशोत्तरम्.  
So the Kali age began from : 1000 + 50 (or 15) + 413 = 1463 B. C. (or 1428 B. C.).

† S. Nalini Mohan Sanyal M. A. in his "*Vaidic Sahityer Kal*" published in *Prabhasi* Magh, 1332 B. S., P. 255.

‡ Prof. E. Washburn Hopkins in his "The Princes and Peoples of the Epic Poems" published in the *Cambridge History of India* p. 251.



Christian era. Without entering into the perplexing details of chronological discussions and examining *in extenso* the conflicting arguments of the various schools, we have to reconcile ourselves to the golden mean. Everybody is unanimous on the point that a good many germs of legends and geneological descriptions enumerated in the Epics are to be found in the Vedas and their Brahmanas, and that this mass of materials (*Gathas* and *Puranas*) was preserved for generations together by different *Sutas* or bards who acted as the kings' eulogisers in peace and charioteers in war, and that they were freshly collected and freely incorporated by Vyasa and Valmiki, the original authors of the Mahabharata and the Ramayana. The principal characters of the Mahabharata seem to be more real and historical than Ramayana. But in both are appended many fables and mythical materials in the spirit of popular belief in that they represent a personality evolved from a divine name and an intercourse with many demi-gods and demons.

Vyasa probably saw with his own eyes the great Mahabharata War and recorded the history of the event in an Epic form in about twenty thousand verses which, in the course of the next few centuries, expanded into about a hundred thousand verses with some prose admixture, at the hands of different unknown poet-historians. That many verses of didactic and narrative nature with elaborations of the original texts were inserted, and interpolations were made even during the Buddhistic age, is amply borne out by the fact that the names of *Buddha*, *Jaina*, *Arhat* and a few contemporaneous customs are here and there found embedded in it. The 18th and 19th chapters of Ramayana bear distinctly the stamp of Buddhistic age and unmistakably are later-day additions. The art of writing was invented in India between 10th century and 6th century B. C., and some Indian antiquarians\* have reasons to believe that Ramayana in its original form was composed before the advent of the script.

Be that as it may, we are assuming that the Ramayana and the Mahabharata were composed, revised and enlarged from the

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\* Kedarnath Mazumdar in "*Ramayanaer Kal*" published in *Saurav Magazine*, Bhadra, 1334 B. S.

18th century B. C. to the third century B. C. and we shall call this long period as the Epic Age, during which, of course, the *Upanishads*, the six schools of Hindu Philosophies, the *Sutras* (Systematic codifications of various branches of Vedic knowledge sacred and secular) and *Smritis* or *Samhitas* (the great ancient law-books) and a few of the eighteen Puranas were composed. We would not, for ostensible reasons, like to burden our brain with the question of the priority of Mahabharata or Ramayana ; but to follow the chronological sequence of events, we shall first deal with Ramayana and then with Mahabharata which present, no doubt, the best portraiture of the times of their composition and elaboration. Only we shall now reproduce certain excerpts from the *Adi Parva* (1st chapter) of the Mahabharata which delineates in a somewhat heightened way the manners and customs of the Vedic Age.

In early Vedic times, as has already been mentioned, we find promiscuity is something that is a matter of course, as was ordained according to the social customs prevailing at that time. A detailed description of what these customs were—is found in the Mahabharata (*Adi Parva*, Chapter CXXM) ; they are expounded by Prince Pandu, who is unable to beget offspring on his two wives owing to a curse ( probably a physical disability ) and enjoins his wife Kunti to beget offspring by others on his behalf.

She at first refuses in all her humility and tells him that she cannot conceive even in her wildest imagination of any other man excepting her husband embracing her, and asks him to procreate sons on her by dint of his ascetic power, as was done by Vyusitashwa, who had married Vadra, the daughter of Kakshivana. This lady was unrivalled on earth for her beauty and this great king seldom lived separated from his wife. They deeply loved each other, and he abandoned himself to unbounded venal pleasures, which brought on consumption and his untimely death. The poor wife was in extreme grief and embracing the corpse, she so much bewailed the loss of her husband and the state of being without an offspring, that even the gods were moved to pity. Then an invisible voice addressed her thus : 'O chaste lady, be with

the corpse on the eight or fourteenth day of the Moon, after the bath of your menstrual period. The corpse will resuscitate of itself and implant seeds in you.' The chaste lady did as she was directed, and afterwards gave birth to 2 *Sallyas* and 4 *Madrus*.

After relating this story Kunti asks Pandu why is he not able to procreate by his ascetic power as was done by Vyusitashwa. Pandu replies that he could do it as he had been a celestial, but since he is a mortal being, it is not possible for him to do the same. He then relates to Kunti the following customs of the hoary antiquity as stated in the *Puranas* (collections of traditic sayings) :—

3. (Says Pandu,) I shall now tell you the religious precepts which the illustrious Rishis, learned in the precepts of virtue, said in the *Puranas*.

4. O beautiful featured lady of sweet smiles, women were not formerly kept in the house. They used to go about freely and enjoyed as they liked.

5. O fortunate lady, O beautiful one, they had had promiscuous intercourse from their maidenhood, and they were not faithful to their husbands. But they were not regarded sinful, for it was the custom of the age.

6. That very usage of the olden time is up-to-date followed by birds and beasts and they are free from anger and passions (for this promiscuity).

7. O lady of tapering thighs, the practice, being sanctioned by precedents, is praised by the great Rishis ; it is still regarded with respect by the Northern Kurus.

8. O lady of sweet smiles, this eternal usage, very favourable to the women, had the sanction of all in antiquity ; the present practice has been established only very lately. Hear, I shall narrate to you in detail who established it, and why.

9. We have heard that there was a great Rishi, named Uddalaka. He had a son, known by the name of Shwetaketu, who was also a Rishi,

10. O lotus-eyed one, the present virtuous practice was established by that Shwetaketu in a fit of rage. I shall tell you how he did it.

11. One day, in the time of yore, in the very presence of Shwetaketu's father, a Brahmin came, and taking his (Shwetaketu's) mother by the hand, said, "Come, let us go."

12. Having seen his mother taken away almost by force, the son of the Rishi grew angry and at the same time became very much afflicted with sorrow.

13. Seeing him thus angry, his father told Shwetaketu, "O child, do not get angry. This is an eternal usage."

14. The women of all the orders on earth are free. O son, all men and women in this matter veritably act as bulls and kine."

15. The son of the Rishi, Shwetaketu, disapproved of this usage, and he established the following practice on earth as regards men and women.

16. O greatly illustrious lady, we have heard that the present practice among men and women dates from that day, but it is not obtaining among other animals.

Shwetaketu enunciated :—

17. The wife, not strictly adhering to her husband, will thereby incur sin, from this date ; she will commit as great and heinous a sin as the killing of an embryo.

18. The man who will go to other women neglecting a chaste and serviceable wife who has from her maidenhood observed a vow of purity, will commit the same sin.

19. The woman, who being commanded by her husband to raise offspring, will refuse to do it, she will commit also the same sin.

Pandu says :—

20. O timid lady, the present virtuous usage was thus established per force in olden times by Uddalaka's son, Shwetaketu.

21. O lady of the tapering thighs, we have heard that Madayanti, being appointed by (her husband) Sandasa, went to (have sexual intercourse with) Rishi Vasistha to raise an offspring.

22. That lady obtained from Vasistha a son, named Asmaka. She did this being deputed by and moved by the desire of doing good to, her husband.

23. O lotus-eyed one, O timid girl, you know our birth ; I have been begotten by uncle Krishna Dwaipayana, in order to expand the Kuru dynasty.

24. O faultless one, seeing all these precedents, you should do my bidding, which is not inconsistent with virtue.

25-26. O princess, O devoted wife, the men learned in the precepts of virtue said that a wife in her season must seek her husband, though she may be free at other times. The wise have said that this was the ancient practice.

27. But O princess, men learned in the Vedas, have declared that whether the act be sinful or sinless, it is the duty of the wife to do what her husband commands.

28. O lady of faultless features, especially I who am deprived of the power of procreation, having yet become desirous of seeing the face of a son, ought all the more to be obliged by you.

29. O amiable lady, joining my palms furnished with rosy fingers like lotus-leaves, I place my hand on your head to propitiate you.

30. O lady of beautiful hair, you should raise accomplished offsprings at my express command with the help of some Brahmins possessed of great ascetic merits. O lady of beautiful lips, by your doing this, I shall go off to the place reserved hereafter for those that are blessed with a son.

As is well known, Kunti atlast agreed, and had Yudhishthira, Bheema and Arjuna by *Niyoga* (deputation). This story from the Adi Parva of Mahabharata gives an idea of the social life during the early Vedic period, thousands of years before it. Of course, during the times of the Epic, marriage laws had already begun to be perfected.

We can very well understand the righteous indignation of Shwetaketu, when he saw his mother being dragged by an unknown person for his sexual gratification ; but it does not seem that his decree against this practice of extra-marital intercourse

was in any way rigidly followed by generations that came after him. Long time after Shwetaketu, women enjoyed full liberty to raise an offspring by some body else if the husband was unable to procreate one, and this had the sanction of religious and social laws of the time. The classification of sons given in the Mahabharata (Adi Parva, Chapter CXX) leaves no room for doubt that promiscuous intercourse had almost its full share in spite of Shwetaketu's Act.

We find 12 kinds of sons recognised by society :—

(1). **Sayamjata** or **Aurasha**—the son begotten by one's own self on his own wife.

(2). **Praneeta** or **Kshetraja**—the son begotten on one's wife by an accomplished person, a cognate or an agnate, with the husband's knowledge and permission.

(3). **Parikreeta**—the son begotten on one's wife by a man for some sordid gain or in lieu of a pecuniary consideration (probably without the knowledge of the husband).

(4). **Paunarvaba**—the son born of a widow or of a woman who has divorced her husband, in each case she being married again and the son belonging to the second husband.

(5). **Kaneen**—the son born of a wife who had had it during her maidenhood.

(6). **Swairineeja**—the son born of a wife who had intercourse with atleast four persons before or after her marriage.

(7). **Dattaka**—a son given away by his father and mother to a sterile relative, who adopts him.

(8). **Kreeta**—a son bought from his parents. It may be from within or without one's own caste.

(9). **Kritrim**—a son adopted from a cognate after due observations of his merits and demerits.

(10). **Sayamupagata**—a boy born of unknown parents coming of his own accord to offer himself as a son.

(11). **Sahorha-Jnatiretah**—if a maiden who became pregnant by one of her relatives and who has been given in marriage

to another in such a state, gives birth to a boy baby, it becomes a Sahorha-Jnatiretah son of the husband.

(12). **Heenayoni-dhrita**—a son born of a woman of some lower caste. \*

This shows that the women were allowed to try different men and means if they failed to raise an offspring by one man or one method. Promiscuity in a limited sense was permitted with the sole purpose of raising healthy offspring. Society believed that every boy was somebody's boy and was always loath to punish a son for the sins of flesh committed by his parents.

But we have already said in the preceding chapter that promiscuity is not prostitution in the truest sense of the term. It was Deerghatama, the prurient saint and blind poet (probably of the Brahmana period) who brought for the first time into this land the cult of inviolable chastity for married women only, and quite unknowingly paved the way for professional prostitution. His law prepared the soil on which soon after the Egyptian seed fell and wonderfully germinated towards the close of the Brahmana period, when prostitution had already passed for a profession. The public women had to wear red garments, red wreaths and red gold ; she was not marked out as something criminal or ill-omened, although her class took a low rank in the social order.

Deerghatama was disturbed in the womb of his mother by the unbridled passion of his uncle and possibly this had the

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\* These twelve kinds of sons were recognised, though not placed on the same footing, by society even down to the latter part of Smṛiti (Samhita) period. Only in the place of "Parikreeta", *Putrika-putra* had been added ; in accordance with a previous stipulation, the married daughter gives away her male child to her father to be adopted by him. Thus a grandson becomes a son and is denominated "Putrika-putra". "Swairineeja" had been replaced by *Gurhotpanna-putra* which means a son born of a wife who has had intercourse with one or more persons other than and without the knowledge of her husband. Sometime after the birth of the child, when it transpires that the issue has been illegitimate, it becomes the *Gurhotpanna-putra* of the husband. "Kritrim-putra" had metamorphosed into *Apabiddha-putra* and "Heenayoni-dhrita" into *Bisheshanabiheena-putra*, the one signifying a foundling fostered as a son, and the other meaning any son begotten on any woman by anybody. ( vide *Vishnu-Samhita*, Chap. xv. and *Vasistha-Samhita*, Chap. xvii. ).

effect of giving him an erotic disposition. Though vastly learned in Veda and Vedanga, he used to indulge in गोषर्मे (i. e. public spooning and incestuous relationship \* like the cattle). His contemporary Munis took great exception to his practising this nefarious system which they thought was against all moral rules. They asked him to go away from their hermitage, and began to shun him.

He had married a young and lovely Brahmin girl by the name of Pradweshi and had several sons by her. Even she began to disregard and hate him. And to the hating wife one day the husband said : "Wherefore dost thou hate me ?" Pradweshi spoke : "Because the husband gives food to the wife, therefore, after the tradition, is he called *Varta* (nourisher) ; and because he offers her shelter, he is called her *Pati* (lord). O great penitent, I have no more power to maintain thee ; I have been ever drudging to keep thee, born blind and inactive, and thy children going, and I have done with it. When the Rishi had heard her words, he spoke, filled with wrath, to Pradweshi and her sons : "Lead me into the house of a Kshatriya, and wealth will befall thy lot." Pradweshi spoke : "Possessions given by thee, O Brahmin, I would not have ; they bring sorrow. Do as thou wilt, O Prince among Brahmins, I shall not maintain thee as hitherto I have."

Upon this, Deerghatama spoke : "From this day on, the course of law in the world is laid down by me. Only one husband will be for the woman the first and the last shelter (*parayana*) so long as she lives. Whether he be dead or alive, she shall have no other man. If a wife goes to another man, then unfailingly she will sink into sin. And for the unwedded woman, too, it is from to-day a crime leading to her loss of caste. Such (outcast) women without their husbands, if they possess a great fortune, will derive little pleasure out of it ; even if they do, it shall ever be dishonour and shame for them."

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\* He criminally assaulted his younger brother Autathya's wife. (*Vayu Purana*, Chap. 99 q. v.).



His wife overcome with anger, asked her sons, Gautama and others, to throw him into the river Gangā ; and in obedience to her bidding, the flint-hearted sons bound the man on to a raft, and left him to be carried away by the tide. Thus tied, atlast he came floating into the land of King Balee, who rescued him, and having heard his story, made use of him in a way corresponding to the peculiar proclivity of the holy man. Thereafter Deerghatama produced several sons on behalf of Balee on his wife and on one of her chaperons.

According to Prof. Meyer, it was Deerghatama who actually "brought into this world the pleasures of love granted for ringing coin"\* , and to prove his proposition, he has foisted a nice interpolation into the clauses framed by Deerghatama and as recorded in the Mahabharata, such as, "*But if (extramarital) copulation does come about, then all men must give money.*†" Unfortunately in the original text of the Mahabharata this line is nowhere to be found, and in *Sloka* No. 132, Chap. 104 of *Sambhava Upaparva* which pertains to the enactment of Deerghatama's unilateral law of chastity, nothing is mentioned in support of Meyer's statement. Shwetaketu was probably wiser than Deerghatama in that he established unequivocal chastity for both men and women. Whereas, the injudicious blind Muni's infliction which tabooed promiscuity on the part of the women only, leaving the men as free as ever, no doubt, laid the foundation stone of the pillar of prospective prostitution. There were, as still there are, a set of men who loved to seek pleasures of love outside or in spite of marriage, and it was they who gradually created a class of women who granted such pleasures either for love or for money, at first secretly ; and when these women, having been found out *in flagrante delicto*, were relegated to an obscure corner of the society by the powers that be, they openly took the scarlet robe of whoredom and gradually formed a distinct professional order. \*

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\* *Sexual Life in Ancient India* (2 Vols.) by Johann Jakob Meyer (George Routledge publication) p. 125.

† *Ibid.* p. 264,

Afterwards the veshyas or strumpets in the Epic, as elsewhere in Indian literature, have taken up an important role in the life of the city. The first definite history of concubinage and relations with slave-girls are found during the reign of Jajati. He obtained Sarmistha, a princess and three other maidens (so-called maids of honour) by virtue of his marriage with Debjani. Subsequently he had to build a special apartment in his palace for Sarmistha and her 1000 or 2000 attending slave-girls.

The next most beautiful descriptive story is probably that of Lomapada, the king of Anga and a friend of Dasaratha, the father of Rama. Lomapada (MBH. *Vanaparva*. Ch. CX) having wantonly told a falsehood to a Brahmin, was abandoned by all the Brahmins. Then without a priest or a preceptor the king became merged in sin and Indra stopped to shower rains on his kingdom. His subject began to suffer. He invited several Brahmins and asked how the Rain-God could be brought to bestow his gift. An old Muni said, "O King of kings, the Brahmins are angry, do something to appease them first. O King, send for the Rishi's son, young Rishwasringa, who knows nothing about the female sex and who dwells from his very birth in the forest taking delight in angelic naivete. If that great ascetic, O king, comes to your kingdom, there is not the least doubt that the clouds will instantly pour rain."

The King of Anga, in consultation with the ministers found out means to serve this end. These ministers called some of the noted courtezans of the city and to them the King said, "You are committed to the duty of decoying Rishyasringa ; employ any means to bring the Rishi's son here." At this the women grew pale, and submitted that the undertaking was an impossible one ; for they feared the holy man's curse. An old woman, however, promised to carry out everything. She had a most splendid barge built, had it decorated with tubs of flower-plants, creepers and festoons, and on this boat-house with the appearance of a floating penitential grove, together with a small following of lovely priestesses of love, made her way to the neighbourhood of Vivandaka's hermitage.

When she had learned from her spies that the father was away, she sent her clever and well-tutored daughter to the youngman of holiness. The daughter asked him in the most euphemistic terms, whether the pious life in the hermitage was taking a prosperous course. Rishwasringa, quite ignorant of the world outside his own hermitage and knowing there was only one sex and one calling in life to which he belonged, welcomed the "tall lord, shining like a light" most respectfully, begged him to be seated on a *Kusha*-grass cushion spread with black antelope skin, and to accept water for washing the feet as well as fruits and roots to eat. Then he wanted to know the whereabouts of the stranger's hermitage-forest, and what was her system of penitential vow. The hetaira spoke, "My delightful hermitage lies beyond this mountain which extends over three *Yojanas* (about 24 miles). This is the pious law of my life not to accept respectful greetings or water for the feet from anybody. You are rather my object of respect. I must embrace a man like you."... His fruits she refused, but gave him delicious foods and drinks instead and sweet-smelling wreaths and bright coloured garments too, which bewildered the innocent Rishi youth. She played before him with a ball, like a bent creeper laden with fruits, kept on putting her arms around him, setting limb fast against limb. She sportively pulled down the flower-laden boughs of the trees, and broke them off; she feigned bashfulness, and lured and led on, as if intoxicated, the youthful penitent. When she saw how Rishyasringa had become deeply roused, she kept on pressing his body into her own and clasped the Rishi again and again in her arms. Then she went away, looking back again and again, pretending she must now go off to make offerings to the holy fire. When she had left, Rishyasringa drunk with love, his mind deranged, his heart winged its way to her only, and in his loneliness he sighed deep out of his tortured soul.

At this moment appeared the son of Kashyapa, Vivandaka, whose eyes were as tawny as those of a lion, whose body was covered with hair down to the very nails of his foot, and whose life was pure and passed in religious meditations,

He came up and saw his son seated alone, pensive, sad and dejected. He was sighing again and again with upturned eyes. Vivandaka thus spoke to his distressed son : "O child, why do you not hew logs for the sacrificial fire ? I hope you have performed to-day the *Agnihotra* (fire-sacrifice), polished the sacrificial ladles and spoons and brought out the sacrificial cow with her calf. O son, you are not in your wonted mood to-day. You look pensive and absent-minded. Why are you so much distressed to-day ? I ask you, who came here to-day ?"

Rsihwasinga said, "Here came a Brahmachari with masses of hair on *his* head. That intelligent one was neither short nor tall. His complexion was like gold ; his big, soft eyes were like the lotus. He was as dazzlingly beautiful as a celestial. His beauty was blazing like the sun. His matted locks were blue, fragrant, long and tied up with strings of gold. A beautiful ornament was shining round his neck ; it looked like the lightning in the sky. On his breast he had two fleshy, hairless and exceedingly beautiful balls.

"His waist was slender, his navel neat and region about the ribs smooth. There shone a golden string from under his cloth like this waist-string of mine. There was on his feet something of a wonderful shape which gave forth a sweet jingling sound. There were also ornaments tied upon his wrists that made a similar sound ; they looked like this rosary here. When he moved about, those ornaments made the sound as that of delightful swans on the waters of a tank. His garments were remarkably nice and hundred times more beautiful than my loin-cloth. His face was of extraordinary beauty, his sonorous voice gladdened the heart. His words far surpassing the song of the male cuckoo, sent waves of thrills in to my innermost heart.

"As the forest in the midst of the vernal season assumes a beauty being fanned by the sweet southern breeze, O sire, so the Brahmachari was scattering exquisite mirth and fragrance when fanned by the breeze. His massy hair neatly tied up stuck to the head and forehead evenly divided in two. He carried

in his right hand some wonderful globular fruits which dropped on the ground and again rose up to the sky in a wonderful way. He played with them and whirled like a tree moved by the cyclone. O sire, when I looked at him, he seemed to me a son of the immortals. My joy was extreme and I felt unbounded pleasure.

"He clasped my body ; he took hold of my matted hair, and drew down my head ; then pressing his mouth with mine, he uttered a sound which gave me a thrilling pleasure. He did not care for water to wash his feet or for fruits offered by me to him. He gave me, on the contrary, some fruits to eat. He told me such was the religious system practised by him. Those fruits were tasted by me. These fruits here are not equal to them in taste. They had neither rinds nor stones as these have. That noble-featured hermit gave me to drink a liquid of exceedingly fine flavour. Having drunk it, I experienced great exhilaration, and I felt as if the ground under my feet was moving away.

"These are the beautiful and fragrant garlands entwined with silken threads. They belonged to him. He scattered these garlands here, and then went back to his own hermitage. At his departure my heart has become pensive, and my body seems to be all ablaze. I long to go to him as soon as I can. Or I desire that he should always live by me here.

"O sire, I shall this very moment go to him. What is the name of the system of penance that is practised by him ? I desire to lead the same life with him—the same religious life led by that young man of noble virtue. My heart burns in his absence."

Vivandaka said, "O son, they are probably *Rakshusas* (demons). They walk about here in wonderfully beautiful forms. O child, assuming beautiful forms they allure the *Munis* by various foul means. Then assuming fearful forms they hurl the ascetics of the forest from the blissful regions down into the dismal abyss. The self-controlled Rishis who desire to obtain the region of the righteous never care to serve them. O son, those are intoxicating liquors, they are drunk by unrighteous people,

These fragrant, bright and multi-colored garlands are not for the ascetics.

When again the son of Kashyapa had gone out to gather fruits, in the meanwhile, that courtesan returned to the hermitage to tempt the Rishi Rishwasringa. As soon as Rishwasringa saw her, he became exceedingly enlivened and rushing towards her said, "Let us go to your hermitage before my father returns". Thereupon leading the only son of Vivandaka to the river and bidding him enter the boat, she unmoored it. The women entertained him by various means and atlast brought him before the King of Anga.

No sooner did the king prepare himself to receive the son of Vivandaka in the female appartments of his palace, than he saw the rain suddenly pour in in torrents. Soon after, the world was flooded with water.

Having his desire thus fulfilled, Lompada bestowed his daughter, Santa, on Rishwasringa, with great eclat. When Vivandaka repaired to his hermitage, he could not find his son. Suspecting that he might have been kidnapped by the king, and bursting with anger he started out to "burn up the king together with his city and kingdom." Lomapada had anticipated this, and everywhere on the whole route—from his city to the penitential grove of the Muni, he had established farms and herdmen's stations with herds of cattle, giving orders to his people that if the holyman came, they were to entertain him most courteously and tell him that all those cattle and fields belonged to Rishwasringa.

The Muni was received everywhere with so much humbleness, being also told all about the splendour that had come on his son, that his wrath died out, and he blessed the union of Rishwasringa with Santa. But he made only one condition with the king that his son should return to the hermitage after the birth of a son. It was none the less fulfilled, and Santa followed her husband joyfully to the forest-hut.

According to some authority, it was Santa, the king's daughter who seduced Rishwasringa with the help of a band of courtezans; while others say, it was the daughter of the harlot who seduced him, and he was afterwards married to Santa. Any

way, Lomapada had a big harem and introduced a large number of courtesans intimately into his court and even with the princesses. This is perhaps the first definite instance of royal recognition and employment of prostitution for political purposes, in the ancient history of India.

Lomapada was a contemporary of Dasaratha, the king of Ayodhya and the father of the hero of Ramayana. We find Dasaratha (in Ramayana ii. sl. 36) giving orders for a splendid army to be fitted out for his eldest son, Rama, and there says, "Women that live on their beauty, those skilled in sweet words, and rich merchants shall adorn the drawn-up troops of the prince." Again when Rama is to be consecrated in a public ceremony as the king-elect (*Yuvaraja*), the priest Vasistha directs the city to be given a festal garb, and amongst all other preparations, there is a band of fair daughters of pleasure drawn up within the second wall of the royal palace.\* He then sends message to the king with a long list of all the holy and wordly requirements whose fulfilment he has now seen to, and the holy man does not forget to lay stress on the point that amid all these preparations, there are the well-attired harlots.

But as luck would have it, Rama, instead of going to be formally installed as a prince, goes into long exile with his wife, Sita, and brother, Lakshmana, to fight with grim fate and the redoubtable Ravana. At last coming off victorious from every ordeal of his demure life of banishment, Rama after fourteen years, returns to his native place. Hanumana brings the good news of Rama's home-coming to Bharata, the half-brother of Rama, and the faithful regent of Ayodhya. He out of ecstasy gives order that 16 women born of noble families with lovely face, beautiful form, well-shaped breasts, broad hips and tapering thighs, and decked with suitable ornaments be given to Hanumana as wives, for bringing these precious tidings. Bharata also proclaims, "Pure men shall honour all the divinities and the holy places of the city with scented wreaths, and to the accompaniment of music. Suta, well-versed in songs of praise and old legends,

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\* *Ramayana*, Bomb. Edition, ii. 3. 17. 18.

as also all panegyrists (*vaitalika*), all masters of musical instruments and the city-women (*ganika*) in full number, the king's wife, ministers, the soldiers and the bands of army, the Brahmins, nobles and the corporations (*gana*) with the heads of the guilds—all these shall go out to behold the moon-like countenance of Rama.\*"

When Bharata went forth to receive Rama outside the city, he came with his mighty train to the Rishi Bharadwaja. This Rishi by his miraculous power entertained the whole crowd of warriors in a way that amounted to real dissipation. The august host presided over the free tables of love in a most magnificent style. This Rishi called down from Indra's paradise the whole host of *Apsaras* (heavenly courtesans) and other divine women of pleasure. Seventy thousands of these beauties were sent down by Brahma, the Creator, ninety thousands by Kubera, the divine Croesus and twenty thousands by Indra. Even the creepers of the forest were by the magic power of the sage turned into delightful women. Seven or eight of these charming specimens of ravishing beauties ministered unto each of the warriors (mostly married) during his bath, afterwards offered him delicious foods and inebriating drinks and lured him to all sorts of carnal pleasures. It is no wonder that they danced and laughed and sang :

"This is heaven ; hail to thee  
O Bharata, here we stay...."

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\* *Ibid*, iv. 127.



## **CHAPTER III**

### **THE GREAT EPIC MAHABHARATA**

#### **The Pandavas and the Kauravas**

Pandavas also appear to have possessed a fine harem as their cousins Kauravas at Hastinapur. At the capital, Indraprastha, their palace was crowded with a large number of female slaves and attendants of all ranks and position, amongst whom were bejewelled court dancing girls and artistes over whom Draupadee, the common wife of the five princes kept a vigilant eye. Every one of them she knew by face and name ; but with whom nevertheless Draupadee and Subhadra, the special wife of the third prince Aryuna, together with the princes, indulged in drunken revelries in the royal summer-resorts on the banks of the Jamuna. This place was covered with all kinds of beautiful groves, trees and foliages interspersed with a variety of variegated houses, comparable with Indra's celestial city and provided with all sorts of rare meats and drinks, as well as decorated with assorted wreaths and laden with manifold perfumes. Here all could make merry to their heart's content. And here the broad-hipped women with inviting, swelling breasts and entrapping eyes sported around with drunken, stumbling gait.

Some of these lovely ones dallied with Krishna and Arjuna in the cosy arbour of the forest, others in the splashing water, others again in the houses, according as the places disposed or as their whims dictated them. Draupadee and Subhadra,

both hilarious with drink, lavishly bestowed clothing and ornaments on these women. Some danced in unbridled passion, others shrieked and screamed with boundless joy. Some were laughing and others drinking the best of liquors (*asava*). Here some were seen clutching and patting one another, others again whispering their secrets among themselves. Houses and gardens as the air in and around them, were filled with the sweet sound of flutes, lutes and tambourines in glorious harmony.

Arjuna, who had just received as a wedding-gift from his friend and brother-in-law, Krishna, full one thousand tender-aged girls of prepossessing beauty to wait on him at bathing and drinking entertainments, was not slow in making the best use of it. Eunuchs also formed a part of the harem establishments as they did at the Matsya Court ; and probably Draupadee herself had a favourite eunuch as her personal attendant.\* The ranks of slave concubines in the Pandava gynæceum must have considerably been swelled by the lavish nuptial presents from Subhadra's kinsmen, the Brishnis or the Yadavas. The youthful south-western beauties were very likely imported in regular traffic by sea from Ratnadweep, an island in possession of the Yadavas in the Arabian Sea and noted for its trade in gems and slave-girls. The Pandava princes were endowed with similar presents of Kairaliki (Himalayan ?) and Magadhee slave-girls from the subordinated tribes and friendly chieftains.

When King Drupada married his daughter, Draupadee, to the Pandavas, he made over to them along with other wedding gifts a hundred slave-girls in the first bloom of their youth, handsomely clothed and laden with ornaments and wreaths. So too the Yadava Chief, Krishna, sent them on this occasion a few well-decked waiting maids recruited from various places—maids who had the gifts of beauty, youth and skill in their calling. At the wedding of Arjuna's son, Abhimanyu, with Uttara, Krishna did not fail to send the Pandavas hordes of women, jewels, clothing etc. The custom of the age was that beautiful maidens were brought as tributes to the liege-lords. To Yudhistihra, the eldest

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Vide Cowell's *Jataka*, Vol. V, p. 225.

of the Pandava princes, a hundred thousand slave-girls wearing shining cotton garb, brunette, slender, long-haired and adorned with gold were given as tributes at his horse-sacrifice (*Rajasuya Yajna*) by the Provincial Governors, Tributary Chiefs and Allies. The Pandava Prince was not to be outdone in courtesy and munificence at this historic occasion. He too recklessly bestowed thousands of young beauties on the assembled guests—kings, priests and Brahmins, and thus earned the gratitude and laudation of all in heaven and earth. This large and choice collection of female slaves, Yudhisthira lost to his cousins, the Kauravas, in dice-gambling.

He staked to boot all his four brothers, with Draupadee in the game and lost everything including his kingdom. According to the terms of the pledges, the Pandavas had to spend twelve years in exile and the thirteenth somewhere in hiding *incognito*. Concealing their identities, they hired themselves out in various positions at the court of King Virata. Yudhisthira was appointed as a steward to the king's gambling-house, Bheema as his cook and circus-wrestler, Arjuna as an eunuch in a woman's garb—a teacher of dancing and music to the young princess and her companions, and so forth. Draupadee went as a chamber-maid and coiffeur into the service of Queen Sudeshna. In this way, they succeeded in keeping themselves quite unknown to the world.

But at the end of ten months, Kichaka, the queen's brother, the Generalissimo to the King's army, and an all-powerful favourite of the Royal household, beholding the dazzlingly beautiful maid of her sister, is fired with love for her. In glowing words he sings the praise of all her charms from the eyes down to her pubic region, paints in dolorous colour his agony of unrequited love, beseeches Draupadee to spare him the pangs of separation and tries to convince her that she will not have thenceforth to live as a lowly house-maid. He offers himself to her as a complaisant innamorato and slave, and says he will cast off his other wives like broken glasses, and give her all the earth's delights to taste. He is, Kichaka then goes to add, the real ruler in the land, and none on earth is his equal in grace,

youthful vigour, success with women, wealth, and other splendid achievements.

Draupadee reminds this lustful creature that she is married to five Gandharvas (professional singers of heaven) and bids him bethink himself what a diabolical deed and a risky affair it is even to touch another's wife. Moreover, she says, if this came to the knowledge of her hard-visaged and hot-tempered husbands, they would kill him outright. Whether he were to penetrate into the earth, or fly up in the air, or flee to the other shore of the sea, he cannot escape from the vendetta of these all-destroying sons of the gods—these cleavers of the earth, water and air. He must be like a prattling child who sits on its mother's lap and wants to clutch the moon !

Kichaka now takes refuge behind his indulgent sister and by his desperate lamentations, moves her to pity and wrings from her an assurance to help him. At her suggestion, he makes a feast ready, and sets off much food and heady drink on the table. Then Sudeshna bids her chamber-maid go into Kichaka's house, and fetch her something to drink. Draupadee humbly answers : "I would fain not go into his house. Thou thyself, O Queen, knowest well how impertinent he is. Kichaka will surely dishonour me, if he sees me alone. I shall, on no account, go there. Thou hast other maid-servants standing at thy bidding. Please send thou another thither." Sudheshna rejoins, "He can never do you any harm, if you are sent by me ;" and she hands her the golden vessel to carry out her order. Weeping and trembling with fear, Draupadee goes. Kichaka calls out to her in blind ecstasy :—

Welcome woman with comely hair,  
How bright the night to me it seems !  
Nearer why not cometh, O dear,  
To fulfill my life's long-drawn dreams.

Gold wreaths, pearl rings, stones and jewel,  
Ornaments and silk apparel,  
Will be thine, come and sit down here ;  
Drink and let love's glory appear !

Draupadee submits that she has been ordered by the Queen to fetch her some choice drink, as she has been feeling thirsty. She has had to come only to act up to Her Majesty's order.

Kichaka retorting that the queen has many other serving women and she (Draupadee) has been sent there not for this ostensible purpose, at once snatches at her garment to denude her; but she pulls the clothes towards her with all her might. In the midst of this tug-of-war, Kichaka slips suddenly and falls on the floor. Then Draupadee runs for protection directly into the Royal *Sabha* where Yudhisthira is on duty. Kichaka pursues her, catches hold of her by the hair, throws her down before the whole assembly and kicks her in a mad fury. But then a demon whom the Sun-god has sent to Draupadee to protect her, rushes in and flings Kichaka headlong upon the ground like a bundle of feather. Bheema has in the mean time made his appearance. Both the brothers have seen what happened.

Over Bheema's eyes there passed a misty shadow, sweat broke out in streamlets from the terrible wrinkleless on his forehead; hand to hand he vehemently pressed and ground his teeth in grim prospect of vengeance. He could contain himself no longer and tried in vain to fix his eyes on a tree standing near by. But Yudhisthira who was anxious lest any untoward movement on their part should give a clue to their identity, made him a sign, and said: "Go to the kitchen and prepare the Royal meal. If you need faggots, then go beyond the city and hew down trees for yourself." Draupadee controlled her emotions, but threw reproachful glances at her husbands, and bitterly bewailed her lot in that this son of a Suta dared kick her—the wife of such mighty heroes, who like cowards witnessed everything but did not raise their little fingers to vindicate her honour.

She loudly vituperated that King Virata and his counsellors too, were shamelessly neglecting law and justice; they were placidly looking on such a dastardly outrage on an innocent woman; they were so many abettors to the crime. But Yudhisthira signalled to remind her that her tongue was outrunning her discretion and openly gave her a courteous assurance that her Gandharva husbands would take revenge in course of time. Blinded by

rage and shame, Draupadee cried out, "I am but too considerate for these weak-souled and mealy-mouthed husbands. What more can I expect of the lot whose eldest is a dice-gambler." With this she went out bitterly weeping. She entered her apartment, tidied herself and set to brooding over what course she should adopt now.

Draupadee finally decided that she would appeal to Bheema who only could help her in this plight. So at the dead of night she crept into the kitchen, and clasping the sleeping Bheema as a creeper does the tree, awoke him. Bheema started up in bed, and asked her what was her complaint. She drew a picture in bitter tears of the most degrading life the brothers had been leading. She herself, she said, was an abject slave ; she, the erstwhile proud daughter of a proud king, the proud wife of five Royal husbands whom the sea-girdled earth obeyed, now must wait in awe on her mistress. Her delicate hands must now pound sandal-wood and prepare salve, and even then she had to tremble to see whether it suited the temperament of her lady. She showed Bheema how her hands had become like the horn-stone. Bheema raised both her hands to his lips and wept silently with her.

Then he explained to her that he himself would have wreaked a bloody vengeance then and there, had not brother Yudhisthira stood in the way ; she must have patience, he assured, only a little while longer, until they could emerge from their obligatory life of disguise before the world. But Draupadee made him realise that the danger from the all-powerful woman-hunter still remained, and that a warrior has no other duty but to extirpate the foe root and branch. Then she added, "Break this ribald down like a pitcher on a slab of stone ; if the sun rises on him to-morrow morning, take it from me, dear husband, I will poison myself to death. I would rather die here before your very eyes than suffer any further indignities at the hands of this ruffian." With tears running down her cheeks, she leaned against his breast in a gloomy abandon. Bheema wiped away her tears, spoke loving words of consolation, imprinted soothing kisses on her lips and said, "Yes, I will kill him to-day together

with his vile associates. Give him a tryst this night at the dancing hall of the King, where the maidens dance at day. There is a firmly built, upolstered and beautiful bed there. On it, I will render him the pleasures of enjoying other's wife."

Next morning Kichaka spoke most scornfully to Draupadee's face. He said, he dared throw her down and heap kicks on her before the whole court and under the very nose of the king; nobody dared utter a word of protest in the face of him, because he was the *de-facto* king of Matsya, and Virata was only a puppet in his all-powerful hand. Then he told her in an insinuating tone not to make any more fuss and nobody in that land would be able to save her honour when he was bent upon taking it. "Like a good girl, take me," he said, "and I shall give you hundred gold coins, hundred slave-girls, hundred attendants and a gilded chariot drawn by beautiful horses." Draupadee pretended to agree on condition that he would not breathe a single word about this affair either to his sister or brother-in-law or to any of his friends. Kichaka readily agreed.

"To-day after dusk, I shall come into thy lonely abode," said Draupadee, "to enjoy with thee the all-effacing raptures of love. Better come after sun-down noiselessly to the dancing-hall of the King and there lie in wait for me. The maidens dance there by day only and there is nobody at night. So we shall not possibly be disturbed there." Kichaka nodded assent and gleefully departed to his quarters. Being much given to luxury, he began to adorn himself with the best of his gala-robcs, scents, ornaments and wreaths. Flared up with the anticipations of love's fulfilment, he kept himself thus busied throughout the whole day. Draupadee in the mean time had slipped away to Bheema and told him all about the arrangement. He now boasted that he would tread out Kichaka's head as the elephant does a *bilwa*-fruit, and butcher all the Matsyas, as well as his eldest cousin, Duryodhana, and rule over the earth. Yudhishthira, he said, could stay on as a servant if he liked it. But she insisted on his carrying out the vengeful deed in secret and going not too far.

At the approach of night, Kichaka stealthily appeared in the dancing chamber and found Draupadee already in waiting. He

spoke with a heart beamed with joy, "My house furnished with all the luxuries of the world and my harem adorned with fair-shaped daughters of pleasure—overflowing in laughter and merriment, all these I have left behind for thy sake, O my heart's desire, and have come hither to sing thy praise and to taste thy pleasure." But lo ! it was not Draupadee to whom Kichaka was addressing, but in Draupadee's garb and veil it was Bheema who replied in a simulated feminine voice, "Really, what a sight of splendour art thou, and no other man is equal to thee !"

Being much flattered and elated, Kichaka advanced to embrace the so-called Draupadee when Bheemsena sprang up like a wounded panther and laid hold of his wreathed hair. Kichaka, nevertheless, half realising the situation, clasped him with his arms and tried to hurl him down on the floor. And then began a keenly-contested tough wrestling between the two stout opponents. But atlength, Bheema over-powered him, squeezed his throat and scrotum and strangled the life out of him like a pigeon. Then in a convulsive rage, he battered and rumbled its arms, legs, head and trunk, till only a shapeless mass of flesh remained. He then called out to Draupadee who had been waiting close by, kindled a light and showed her the dreadful sight. Full of joy she ran out to announce to the wardens of the *Sabha* that the Gandharvas, her husbands, had slain Kichaka, the great molester of women. What followed thereafter is too well-known to need any repetition here and will not possibly come within the purview of our subject.

The Kichaka incident of the Mahabharata has been described here in detail only to show the depravity of the royal courts at the time. What was true of Matsya was true of other courts as well. Hastinapur court at that time was the leading model which other potentates tried blindly to follow, and it could boast of such savants and veteran warriors as Bhishma, Drona, Kripa, Karna, Bidur and others. At this court in the presence of Dhritarashtra, the blind Emperor, and an august assembly, Prince Duhshasana, one of the cousin brothers of the Pandavas, after their complete discomfiture in dice-gambling, dragged Draupadee in and attempted to strip her naked and thereby insult her crest-fallen husbands



to their heart's content. Paradoxical though it may sound yet it is true that when the Kaurava Prince catching hold of his sister-in-law's hair and flinging the most filthy taunts on her, was pulling about her clothes, nobody had the moral stamina to object to these monstrous outarges in spite of her heart-rending supplications and pathetic wailings. Nevertheless, the most remarkable feature of the story is that the only man who atlast stood up with angelic audacity and stubbornly protested against this inhumanity, was Bidur, the natural son of a waiting maid of the late Empress !

These only go to prove without a shadow of doubt the depth of moral deterioration of most of the princes of the Great Epic Age. No wonder that any young and graceful waiting maid would be absolutely at the mercy of her master or his kith and kin. And once his lust kindled, the only way left for the poor girl to escape dire persecution was either an unconditional surrender or a *felo de se*. After his acute lust was satiated, all she could do was either to be thrown over or to add to the number of his concubines.

### **The Madrakas and Bahleekas.**

Karna, the cast-off *kaneen-putra* of the dowager Kunttee, had been invested with the kingdom of Anga by the Kauravas and became a stout lieutenant of his friend and supporter Duryodhana, in the Kuru-Pandava War. Shalya, the king of Madra and an ally of the Kauravas, was appointed a charioteer and second lieutenant to Karna. In the thick of the war, one day Karna directed King Shalya to drive his chariot close upon the enemy's line, so that he might break lances with and vanquish the Pandava hero Arjuna. When his chariot drawn by white steeds came near the enemy's line, Karna shouted out to the Pandava rank and file and said : "Ye heroes, him who amongst you will point out Mahatma Dhananjaya (one of the twelve names of Aryuna) to me, shall I give anything he desires." And amongst the proffered rewards what was given special stress to by the arrogant donor, was hundreds of nullipara ( **अजातपुत्र** ) women with silken hairs, faultless features and guinea-necklaces ( **निज्जकण्ठ** ) on, specially hailing

from the land of Magadha. Every student of Indian history is aware that ancient Magadha occupied a major portion of modern Central and South-western Behar. In the times of the Epics and the early Purānas, the Māgadhee men were noted for their exquisite art in minstrelsy and the women were probably famous for their enchanting beauty and many for their easy virtue. Regular traffic in Māgadhee girls was in evidence throughout India, and an aristocrat's harem was deemed incomplete without a few Māgadhee slave-maids or concubines.

King Shalya, an outspoken man that he was, found no reason to spare himself making the remark that Arjuna was no less a tough fighter than he (Karna) and it was folly to be cock-sure of stumping him in a duel; he should not have to go to the length of offering the enemy soldiers such a variety of princely perquisites, as Arjuna would before long come of himself to take up the gauntlet. A jackal, as long as did not come by a lion, Shalya added, plumed himself upon being the biggest hero in the forest. Such was the case with Karna too. He would no doubt appear before the mighty-bowed Aryuna, as a jackal before a lion.

At this Karna flew into a violent rage and bade Shalya keep silence, as he wanted not to be counselled by his charioteer. Then he proceeded to villify the charioteer-king, his land and his people. From these loop-holes of vituperation, many truths, no doubt, sallied forth and through them we can catch a glimpse of the manners and morals of the Madrakas at the time. Modern archæologists have identified some of the bordering districts of the North Punjab as well as a portion of south Kāshmir with Madra of yore. The land of the Bahleekas (Baheekas) was situated perhaps adjacent to it and formed much of the North Western Kashmir and the part of North Western Frontier Province north of Kabul River. Modern Balkh has been verified, though without sufficient reasons, as the defunct capital of the ancient kingdom of the Bahleekas. In the time of the Mahabharata War, the land of the Bahleekas was either under the sway of or tributary to the Madra kings and both these people were in many respects identical. In the beginning of the Buddhistic age, the kingdom of Madraka was greatly reduced and delimited to the delta between the

Rives Chenub and Ravi. Karna's remonstrances with the Madraka king included some innuendoes *ad rem* against the Bahleekas too. Some excerpts as will be appropriate to our subject are reproduced from the *Karna Parva* of the *Mahabharata* (Chapters XLI and XLV) below :—

Amongst the Madrakas, the father, the son, the mother, the mother-in-law, the father-in-law, the maternal uncle, the son-in-law, the daughter-in-law, the brother-in-law, the brother, the grandson, other relations and guests, slaves—male and female, freely mingle together. The Madra women enter into liasion with men at their sweet pleasure. Being immersed in wine, they take fried and powdered corn ( *अणू* ), fish and beef, and laugh and cry being wholly intoxicated. Likewise they some times break into rhapsodies and sometimes into incoherent ravings. The Madraka women under the influence of liquor, throw off their robes and dance ; devoid of all self-control they can give themselves up to any man that suit their purpose. Riding roughshod, they answer the calls of nature like camels and asses. When a Madraka woman is requested by somebody to give a tiff of vinegar, she slaps her nates and with a reluctant nod answers, "Let no one ask of us vinegar which is so dear to us. We would fain give you our men or children, but we would not part with our vinegar." The Madraka maidens, we ( Karna and others ) are informed, are generally shameless, wrap themselves up in blankets, are gluttonous and impure.

In Dhritarashtra's assembly chamber, Karna continued, the Brahmins used to describe pleasant journeys in many unknown regions and the lives of many age-honoured kings. One aged and leading Brahmin amongst them, thus began to decry the Bahleekas and the Madrakas : "O King ! one should always avoid the impure and impious Bahleekas who live away from the Himālayas and the rivers Gangā, Saraswati, Jamunā and the plain of Kurukshetra as well as the river Sindhu (Indus) with its five tributaries. For some strategic mission I had to live some time with them, during which I had the opportunity to study them well. There is a town of the name of Shakalaka (modern Sialkot), a river by the name of Apaga and a clan of the

Bahleekas known as Jarttikas. Their conduct is very reprehensible. They are much addicted to the liquor called *Gourhi Sura* and take fried barley, beef and boiled rice with garlic that are bought of others ( i.e. in a hotel ). They are shorn of all good practices.

Their women all and sundry take wine and when tipsy become nude ; they laugh and dance near the walls of the urban houses, without of course any garlands and sandal-unguetum, singing various obscene songs and braying like the ass or the camel. They can quite unconscionably form illicit connection within or outside her family. Inebriate they address people with endearing terms....One of these wicked Bahleekas who had been making a sojourn in Kurujāngala burst out one day with a heavy heart, saying, 'Surely my dear girl dressed in her fine blankets does think of me, whenever she goes to bed. Crossing the charming Sutlej and the Irāvati and going back to my native land when shall I be able to look at those beautiful women with thick frontal bones, with shades of red arsenic on their foreheads, cheeks and between their parted hairs, with black collyrium at their shining eyes and their beautiful forms dressed in blankets and hides ? When shall I be happy again in the company of those sportive women amid the sound of drums, kettle-drums and conches sweet as the brays of asses, the cries of camels and the neighs of mules ?'

The region where the Pilu forest stands and the five tributaries Shatadru, Vipashā, Irāvati, Chandrabhāgā, and Vitastā of the river Sindhu flow away from the Himalayas, is called Arāṭta. This Province is shorn of all virtue and religion. No one should go there. The celestials, the ancestral manes and the Brahmins never accept offerings from the Valheekas inhabiting Arāṭta. Almost all of them are bastards. The wise should always shun Arāṭtic Valheekas. The Gāndhāra, the Madrakas and the Bahleekas are all given to sexual excesses, are light-hearted and narrow-minded. O King of Madra, listen to what I have heard from a gentleman more about the Bahleekas. Years ago a band of Arāṭtic robbers having kidnapped a virtuous lady and broken her vow of chastity in a most ruthless manner, she cursed them thus : "As ye have taken away my chastity, henceforth a ll

thine women be verily like harlots. Ye shall never be able to purge off this inordinate sin." O Shalya, on the score of this, the Arattic sister's son ( and not the son ) becomes the heir and legal representative....

### The Yadavas

Prince Yadu was a step-brother of Prince Puru from whom the Kauravas and Pāndavas descended. Prince Yadu having incurred the wrath of his father Yajāti, had to forego his claim to the ancestral throne and moving southwards founded a small principality near Muttra. The Yādava brothers and great Epic figures, Baladeva and Krishna, migrated to Gujrat and established the famous Yādava kingdom of Dwārakā or Dwārābati. At the incipience of the new city, the two princes saw that among the merchants, craftsmen, artisans, warriors, clergies and minstrels and all the amenities of city-life, prostitutes had settled in large numbers, so that there might not be any flounder or feuds amongst the Yādavas over the paucity of the fair sex. Almost a similar case happened when Remus and Romulus founded the eternal city of Rome. Women were lacking to the Romans for the purpose of forming either legitimate or illegitimate unions to such an extent that they had to have resort to the lifting and rape of the Sabine women. Still there was dearth of women which was, however, made good by foreign beauties who came there in hosts to carry on their shameless commerce.

Krishna, first a bucolic hero and then the greatest diplomat of the age (subsequently being deified as an incarnation of God Vishnu), in addition to his one thousand married wives, had a big harem with about 16,000 beautiful girls in a bond of concubinage. As has already been said, choice maidens recruited from all quarters were given away as gifts and tributes to the friends, relatives and feudal lords, and Krishna received many such beauties during his incumbency. The conquest in wars also entailed the transference of the entire or a part of the harem of the conquered ; and the number of concubines in Krishna's domestic establishments in this way was gradually swelling to an enormous proportion. Narakāsura of Pragy-

tishpur (North-eastern Himalays), a very powerful autocrat, forcibly kidnapped or procured 16,000 handsome princesses of different lands and kept them in his palace to serve his unmitigable depravity. He came in conflict with Krishna and was killed, upon which Krishna transferred his whole harem of 16,000 girls to Dwāraka.

The grand total of the Yādava chief's harem inmates ultimately came up to about 60,000 which included the most bewitching slave beauties, renowned artistes, chaperons, matrons and probably a good many lovely shepherdesses in state employ. The precious jewels counted amongst these beauties were of course accomplished women of south-western districts, Kairaliki and Māgadhee girls. We have already enumerated that most of the south-western beauties were imported in regular traffic by sea from Ratnadweep, the island in possession of the Yādavas in the Arabian Sea. This island was inhabited by a tribe called Nishada, most of whom were sea-faring merchants, slave-dealers and pearl-fishers. A few generations after, a number of the Yādavas under Hāreeta even colonised this island. The Epic and the Purānas are full of lovely love-episodes of Krishna and his romantic adventures with these girls and many others from his early boyhood, details of which are sufficient to fill up a fairly big volume.

When Arjuna was staying as a much-beloved guest with the Yādavas on the hill-resort of Raivataka, he found by his side many minstrels and serving women to wipe away his tedium at day and lull him to sleep at night. At a holiday celebration, there was a regular exhibition of the Yādava and Andhaka beauties; drink and dances were at their climax; feast and frivolity, hob-nobbing and hilarity transcended all bounds of conventionality. Baladeva, the elder brother of Krishna had been drinking like a fish. The mighty king Ugrasena was strolling in his belvedere garden surrounded by many sweet-singing Gandharvas and full one thousand maids of pleasure. Akrur, Sāraṇ, Prithu, Satyak, Babhru, Uddhaba, Gadā and other notable figures were at their best in the drinking bout each with his respective Gandharvas and a galaxy of coquettish

concubines. It was here that Arjuna caught sight of Subhadra, Krishna's step-sister and fell at once in love with her, which ultimately induced him to make off with the precious object of his desire.

The destructive Yādava civil wars at the fag-end of Krishna's life-time produced chaos and disorder all over the country. Many harem girls taking advantage of the laxity of vigilance and connivance of their masters forsook the Royal roof and went away to different places to become courtesans of a better class. After Krishna's death, some were carried away by the robbers and other passed into hands of the lenons and bullies and were reduced to prostitution, in which trade, they were thoroughly instructed by such noted adepts as Astābakra, Dattaka and Vātsāyana. Certain Purāṇas have deemed it worth their while to give substances of these instructions to which we shall have occasion to refer hereafter.

Of Krishna's descendents, his son Pradyumna replenished his ancestral gynecium with a good many wives and concubines. His another son Samba had intrigues in his father's unweildy harem, for which he was punished along with his abetting wives. Krishna's grandson, Aniruddha was no less a respecter of his family traditions; and his son, Vajra inherited an overflowing harem from his predecessors, with which he removed to Indraprastha, the Pāṇḍava capital, the *El Dorado* of his time. In course of our treatment of the Puranas, we shall once again have to come upon the Yādavas and their accursed kingdom.

A few words more on Epic Prostitution and we have finished this chapter. The prostitutes at this age formed a part of the army marching to battles, though probably they were not allowed to settle within or near the soldiers' barracks in times of peace. At least in three conspicuous places of the Mahabharata we find the harlots in large numbers employed by the state and accompanying the princes and their vast retinues to the field of action. The Pandava princes true to their pledges after spending several years in the different parts of the country in the garb of friars, came atlast to a forest named *Dwaita Bana*. The leading Kaurava prince, Duryodhana in order to show off

his vaunted arrogance and parade his unsurpassing splendours before his ill-fated cousins, at once set out for it with his ninety-nine brothers and their wives, Karna, uncle Shakuni and thousands of city women, numberless carts, carriages, merchants with their merchandise, huntsmen, domesticated prisoners and so on. With the advent of this magnificent host the slumbering forest bestirred itself to animation and looked like a populous city. Duryodhana and his followers before the eyes of the Pandavas gave free rein to their luxury and license. The city women were not deemed sufficient to meet the exigency of the occasion and they were much relieved when myriads of cowherds and milk-maids well-versed in the art of music and rustic waltz and bedizened with nice ornaments arrived in their tents from the neighbouring villages.

When the pledges were completely redeemed at the end of the thirteen years, the Pandavas asked of their cousins to restore their legal half share in the dominions to their possession. Prince Duryodhana, who was the mouth-piece of his blind incapable father, defiantly declined to yield them an inch and asked them to fight for it if they could. The result was the great Kuru-Pandava War in which practically all the rulers of India participated, which entailed an untold loss of limb, life, money and property and which ended in a glorious victory for the Pandavas. But just before the actual clash of arms, Krishna who was respected by both the contending parties and who always stood for a just cause comes to the Kuru capital to prevail upon the Kauravas to bury the hatchet and to see for himself whether there was any way left to avert the impending catastrophe. Dhritarashtra hearing of his intended visit from the harbinger, at once issues a mandate to his officers to proclaim throughout the length and breadth of the metropolis to the effect that all princes of the royal blood barring Duryodhana should in their best attires and most precious jewels drive up in magnificent chariots to the city-gate to give the revered guest a fitting reception; thousand and thousand of the city-women in their gala-apparels should walk on foot to meet him; and that the ladies of all houses should come out of their secluded nooks and go forth



freely without their veils to behold Mahatma Madhusudana. The Emperor further orders his chamberlain to get Prince Duhshāsana's apartments vacated at once and keep them ready for Krishna and his suite as also eight elephants, sixteen gold-plated chariots—each drawn by four horses, one hundred valets and an equal number of rose-coloured, nullipara chambermaids to wait upon him.

On the eve of the memorable action, and in the midst of a brisk recruitment, training, equipment and despatch of forces from both sides to the front, the pious Judhisthira, sends one of his envoys to the outskirts of the royal city with tender greetings for the beautiful granters of venal love, saying: "Ask after the welfare of the fair decked, scented and pleasing women of the city (वेन्द्रीयः) whose glance and speech glide forth so readily and sweetly." The purveyors to the war were not only charged with supplying rations, uniforms, arms and conveyances, but all sorts of luxuries as well, the women of pleasure as a matter of course coming to the top of the list. The heroes in the camp were never to feel that they were not at home there—bereft of all the amenities of a city-life. When the main body of the Pandava army was moving towards the battle-field of Kurukshetra, there were thousands of carts, chariots, pavilions, traders' goods, harlots and draught-animals.

Crown Prince Duryodhana on the other side had also fastidiously formed the vanguards of the baggage train with thousands of craftsmen, professional singers and musicians, spies and *ganikas*. Spacious tents with frilles, festoons and banners were pitched on about twenty miles of the battle-field in a circular fashion and the whole encampment looked like a second Hastinapur. The imperious Crown Prince of a field-marshal was nevertheless all attention to his allies and regularly looked after the soldiers, elephants, steeds, as well as the prisoners, minstrels and harlots. The wives of the Princes and Generals were generally stationed a few miles away from the shooting line and often in a well-guarded fort. During a

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\* *The Mahabharata* (Bombay Edition) Udjoga Parva, Chapter CLI, Sl. 57-58 & Chap. CLMXVI, Sl. 26,

lull in the fight they could visit the camps under cover of darkness and share the straw-beds of their lovers for a few hours. The *Yanas* or conveyances and draught-animals in the moving columns or the retreating forces were evidently for use of the camp-hetairæ also, who were otherwise debarred from them in the city. In ancient Greece, Rome and France, the same law prevailed and the prostitutes like the serfs were never accorded the privilege of a conveyance except in war.

The harlots and hetairæ were not only the *sine que non* of an expedition and an indispensable ornament of the camp-life, but were flowers that brightened the *table d'hôte* in feasts and festivals. The kings, the lords and the well-to-do's hired their services when they went out on hunting or to take a diversion in the country-house, not to speak of their occasional excursions to the hill-stations or the pleasure-gardens. Strumpets conversant with many, if not all of the sixty-four arts, were in great demand at the residence of the aristocracy on special days and they were called forth to give a show of all their acquirements before a gathering of respectable guests. The "*Boranganas*" (beautiful and chaste ladies of the harem) and "*Bāranganas*" (women of the city) were equally entitled to receive an august guest to the royal household or give an ovation to a prince returning victorious from the battle-field, with frield paddies (लाज), flowers and sandal-paste. King Virāta, hearing the victory of his son Utara with of course the substantial help of the valiant Pandavas in disguise in a battle, charges his ministers to promulgate his order throughout the city: "Go into the city and make known my victory over the enemy at *Gogriha*. Young girls and the beauteous *ganikās* in their dazzling attires must come out of their houses with all kinds of musical instruments to meet me and then go to welcome my successful son in a triumphal procession." *En passant* it behoves us to mention here that the princess Uttarā wearing a bejewelled diadem and with a

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\* *Op. cit.* Chap. CLMXVI, P. 348.

garland and a nosegay in her hand, was seen in front of this procession of Barānganas and Bārānganās\*.

The *gunikas* formed an essential accessory in marriage, christening and other domestic ceremonies. Though the social law-givers ordained that partaking the food of a harlot leads to misery (गनिकात्रं लोकेभ्यः परिकुर्वन्ति), the pleasure-mongers best honoured the law by violating it. The *veshyās* sometimes gave themselves in marriage with Brāhmins and Khsatriyas in accordance with the Gandharva system, by virtue of which they could occupy an exalted position in society. Moreover, the accomplished *veshyās* always had the chance of being up-lifted to the ranks of a concubine and of being comfortably ensconced in an aristocrat's harem. Matrons who were regularly elected by votes from among the concubines with the final ratification of the master of the establishment, were in a later period came to be known as *Mahottarika*. They formed guilds, held meetings and agitated for greater civic and domestic rights and competed for proficiency in all branches of fine arts and culinary science. The stern law-givers of the Epic age no doubt tried their level best to keep this vile commerce in check and clearly define the diverse rights and privileges of a chaste and an unchaste women, but the popular trend seems to have gone often in the teeth of the regulation, although it was learning to put a heavy premium upon the female chastity as far as one's daughters and wives were concerned.

We have already spoken sufficiently of the waiting maids or slave-girls of the time, who, if young and handsome, always strove amongst themselves for winning the hearts of their masters and becoming dummy-dolls at their hands for as many days as their fate ordained. We have mentioned too that King Judhisthira who has been sung by the Epic-writers as the greatest emblem of virtue and veracity inspite of his being a staunch gambler, had been the recipient of one hundred thousand lovely maids at his horse-sacrifice ceremony from the allied chiefs in addition to a large number that had already

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\* *Ibid.* (Bombay edition) Virata Parva, Chap. MIV, 17-18 & LXVIII ; 24-29.

been embellishing his vast establishment. King Jainasena alone paid him a homage of fourteen thousand slave beauties on this occasion. This righteous King used to maintain in his Royal palace about eighty-eight thousand students fresh from the college-convocation with their diplomas and contemplating marriage and suitable avocation in life (ब्राह्मण भेषजि). By a Royal behest each of them received thirty beautiful maids to wait upon him and remain always at his beck and call. Although the Epic is indifferently reticent on the further development of this tempting arrangement, it is not difficult for us to determine that Cupid had to keep himself busy most of the time with his irrevocable bow and arrows, and many new lives were ushered into existence to share the bountiful hospitality of the King.

*Krishna-Dwaipayana Vedavyasa* who is acknowledged to be the original writer of the Mahabharata, the classifier of the Vedas and one of the greatest sages of the age, did not hesitate to introduce himself as the illegitimate son of the fisher-maiden, Satyabatee, who was afterwards wedded to King Swāntanu, the grand-father of Dhritarāshtra. When Dhritarāshtra's father Bichitraveerya could not beget offspring on the score of his sexual impotence, Satyabatee called in her natural son to produce *Khetrajaputras* on behalf of his half-brother. Accordingly by Vedavyasa, Dhritarashtra and Pandu were brought into the world through the wombs of Ambikā and Ambālikā, the two unfortunate wives of Bichitra-veerya. A young maid-servant of Ambālikā having been deputed to render unto the great Vyasa her best services, became soon big with a child and brought forth Bidur, the most outspoken savant. It is a noticeable feature of this period that most of the bastards were ranked amongst the highest celebrities of the time and with a heritage of wonderful intelligence and by dint of their own deligence, perseverance and pious living they have earned an undying fame in the Puranas of the country.

We shall now cite the last but not the least outstanding instance of concupiscence of the ancient kings and rich endowments of their bastards. Rishi Mārkaṇḍeya relates to Yudhisthira the life history of Rishi Baisravana who might have been a

contemporary of King Dasaratha of Ajodhya. Baisravana was the son of Rishi Pulasta, one of the *mānasa-putras* (mind-begotten sons) of the Creator who was dotingly fond of His grandson. By Him was Baisravana daubed the king of Lankā island (most probably Ceylon of the present day). He had on one of his wives a son named Kuvera who grew to rule over the rich Yakhsas and become the wealthiest person in heaven and earth. Mārkaṇḍeya does not enlighten us as to how many wives this fortunate king was in possession of ; but he has given us the names of three women kept by him, such as, Puspotkatā, Rākā and Mālīni. They are described as *Rākhsasees*, in other words primitive inhabitants of the island who did not subscribe to the orthodox Aryan faith. Though the Rakhsasas and Rakhsasees have been, as a general rule, painted black, being of a hideous nature with ugly bodies of plethoric proportions, yet these three Rakhsasee women are said to have been fair-looking and skilled in dancing and music. They always vied with one another to draw exclusive attention of their master. These three women in course of time bore him children who became all notorious or famous in ancient literature for their extraordinary achievements. Pushpokatā gave birth to Rāvana and Kumbhakarna, Rākā to Khara and Surpanakhā (a daughter) and Mālīni to Bibhishana. Every reader of Rāmāyana knows full well how Rāvana usurped the throne of Lankā, shook heaven and earth by his astounding deeds of valour and ultimately met a tragic death at the hands of Rama. Bibhishana, the god-fearing and righteous Rakhsasa brother, stood faithful by the side of Rama during the whole encounter and was finally ordained a vassal-king.

When India and Egypt were passing through legal prostitution, concubinage and relationships with slave-girls, other contemporaneous civilisations had not been innocent of these practices ; on the contrary, they were in a whirlpool of the most abominable lewdness which were fast leading the people to disastrous consequences \*. In most of the countries worst forms of religious prostitutions and homo-sexual relationship with the

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\* *Leviticus*, Chap. XIX.

effeminate priests were raging round the temples of Moloch, Baal-peor, Mylitta, Astarte, Venus Genetrix etc. With the advent of Moses, sacred prostitution rose to its highest pitch and the *Kedeschoths* ('sacred girls') more than ever prostituted themselves for the benefit of the altar and their bellies. Moses framed a code of religious and political laws and tried with an iron hand to cut the Gordian knot of corruption in order that 'the land may not fall to whoredom nor become full of wickedness\*.' The Israelites at this time were rotten to the core with venereal maladies and worst types of leprosy. Moses by way of exterminating sacred and guest prostitutions, quite unknowingly suffered the weeds of legal prostitution to grow exuberantly and in raising the moral tone of his own people allowed foreign women almost free access to his country to spread the contagion of immorality. Like Deerghatama, Moses established the law of virginity for all maids and prescribed for the married women a chastity so rigorous that on a flimsy ground of violation their limbs could be mercilessly mutilated or they could be put to the gallows. But he was more indulgent towards men than the weaker sex and perhaps most hospitable to the exotic women who flocked in numbers to Palestine to seek their fortune. That Moses did not preach by practice can best be determined by the fact that when more than a hundred years of age, he took an Ethiopian woman as his concubine, who afterwards might have risen to the status of a wife. Mary, the sister of the Lord's favourite was cursed by Moses for speaking ill of this swarthy Ethiopion beauty, and she became a leper all white as snow†.

The kings and judges that came after Moses, though waged an implacable war on the false gods and the sacred prostitution that still lurked in their odious cults, yet they were conniving with a regrettable nonchalance at the legal prostitution which was gradually raising its hydra-heads in the chosen region of the Lord. The books of *Joshua and Judges* and the *Proverbs* have given us enough materials to deduce from that the laws of Moses went practically to naught and the

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\* *Leviticus*, Chap. XV and *Numbers*, Chap. VI.

† *Histoire de la Prostitution* by Pierre Dufour, Chap. III.

Jews were showing no palpable aversion to all sorts of prostitution. Bastards were recognised by the state and the society and enjoyed the same civic rights as the legitimate sons. The brave Israelite General, Jephthah was the son of a known prostitute of Gilead. This General, probably in commemoration of his mother, consecrated to the Lord the virginity of his only daughter. The reader of the Mahabharata knows that Kuntée had had her three sons Yudhishthira, Bheema and Arjuna as a result of her congress with the gods, who if we be permitted to reduce mythology to a historical basis, were none other than godly men. In a like manner, the Great Samson was given to his sterile mother by "a man of God whose face was like that of an angel." This God-beloved Samson's adventures with Delilah and other lecheresses are too well-known to the student of history to have any occasion for reiteration here. For centuries thereafter, there reigned in Israel a series of kings who abandoned themselves to all sorts of sensual sins and for all that, were not forsaken by God. The wise Solomon, the most brazen-faced of all, who reigned a thousand years before Christ, side by side with elevating the Jewish nation to the highest degree of material prosperity, gave the license of manners a most scandalizing countenance. He maintained a number of foreign women in his palace and drank to the dregs the frothy beauty of a Pharaoh's daughter whom he had espoused. He had full seven hundred wives and three hundred concubines, who carried him away to the bellowing sea of sexual excesses and made him forget his true God. He gave prostitution a legal existence, gave the daughters of beauty a due recognition and even protected them by laws.

The plague of prostitution left none innocuous amongst the Jewish nation. There had grown up tents and vaults of debauchery at the cross-ways of all the roads of the cities and at the very gates of the Lord's temples. Isaiah reviled the people of Tyre as to have 'prostituted their daughters with all the nations of the earth.' "Israel might now in the matter of prostitution teach all the peoples who had instructed it and whom it had surpassed\*." The prophets from Isaiah to Ezekiel have given us

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\* *History of Prostitution*, Paul Lacroix, Vol. I, P. 56.

the most frightful details of Jewish corruption before the coming of Jesus, who with his all-forgiving divine soul reclaimed many famous prostitutes of the time including Mary Magdalen—later a patroness of repentant and sinning women !

We have already said something about the religious prostitution of Egypt and its rapid reversal into the phase of legal prostitution. It is not the place to treat at some length of the horrible excesses the cult of Isis and Osiris gave rise to nor will it be meet here to examine in detail the lives of the Pharaohs and Ptolemies in relation to prostitution and its attending evils. Herodotus collected good many examples of sexual aberrations of this ancient people and their kings, mostly from the darkest alcoves of tradition. According to this respectable antiquarian, the corruption of the people reached such a climax that the chastity of young and beautiful women even after their death was not safe at the hands of the embalmers of dead bodies. "There is a tale", avers Herodotus, "that one was caught in the act with a woman who had recently died." Cases are recorded which go to show that some of the kings prostituted their daughters for political or purely personal reasons. Herodotus has recounted though with some diffidence, the case of King Rameses who reigned about 2244 B.C. and who ordered his daughter to ply prostitution till the thief, who had pillaged his treasury was caught. She received with equal formality all the visitors to her abode of pleasure. But for apparent reasons had made a vow not to accord her esteemed favours to anybody who would not tell her about the most subtle act of wickedness perpetrated in his life. The thief one day came to visit this newest addition to the beauty-market and bragged before her with a bravado that he had committed the theft into the Royal treasury. Upon this, the princess caught hold of his hand and cried to the sentries in mufti to come to her aid. But the cunning thief had in the meantime managed to escape leaving behind him a false hand—the hand of a dead man which he had cut off and placed under his cloak from beforehand. This most ingenious trick of the thief so pleased the Pharaoh that he not only pardoned him but made him his son-in-law.



The city of Naucratis during the time synchronizing with our Epic Age, was celebrated all throughout South Europe and North Africa for its costly courtezans. The unflinching love of Rhodopis for the handsome Charaxus and her brave denial to the King Amasis have been immortalized by Poet Pausidippus in his book on *Ethiopia*. The ruinous favours of Archidice and other hetairæ and their arrant adventures with the best people of the time will fill the heart of the least steady moralist of our day with a shocking repugnance. Ptolemy Philadelphus had a great number of beautiful women at his service, such as Cliene, Mneside, Pothyne, Myrtium and many others. Cliene who served him as a chalice-bearer was fortunate enough to have statues erected in her honour, while Myrtium who had been formerly a dealer in pleasures with the boatmen of the Nile, was elevated to the position of the king's most favourite concubine who is said to have yeilded him the greatest voluptuous transports.

Greece from time immemorial had been the seat of sacred prostitution. Its theogonic conception was probably indebted to the Indo-Aryan culture and its anthromorphism which bore a close resemblance to that of the Vedas was no doubt responsible for an imaginative vivacity of the people, specially in regard to all matters of love. The Greek Epics have got much in common with our Epics both materially and spiritually; and their priests and poets in a common concord took upon themselves the task of discovering, fabricating, and recording the annals of their gods and pre-historic forefathers, almost after the manners of our Purānas. Of course there are many materials of historical importance mixed up with this mythology from which at least a vivid idea of the manners, morals and mentality of the peoples of the age can be derived. From the times of Ogyges and Inachus prostitution showed itself under manifold forms, and the people under the spell of a soothing climate and an abundance of nature's luxuries ardently gave themselves up to the worst forms of debaucheries in the manner of their gods and goddesses. Slave-girls and concubines were in great appreciation during the heroic age. The Greek *Vyasa*, Homer, mentions with impunity the rich presents which Agamemnon offers

to Achilles, in his famous Epic\*, and which were none other than "seven women, clever in fine works, seven Lesbians, whom he had chosen for himself and who took from all other women the prize of beauty." Prostitution was personified in the fatherland of Orpheus and Hesiod in Venus Pandemos. Love, physical beauty, indecent jokes, amorous inconsistency, drinking and revelry were apotheosised in Venus under different names with a host of other goddesses whose statues and temples were erected all over the country. In many of these temples the courtesans fulfilled the functions of priestesses in order to augment the revenue of the altars and earn a decent competence for themselves. Strabo states positively that it was a general usage in Greece to dedicate to Venus a certain number of young girls when one saw his vows had been fulfilled by the goddess, and that the temple of Venus at Corinth possessed more than a thousand courtesans of varying ages who had thus been once consecrated to her by the devoted worshippers. Xenophon before the commencement of the Olympic games promises Venus Pytho a gift of fifty hetairæ if he wins the laurel. He comes off victorious and keeps his promise. Poet Pindar on the occasion of Xenophon's consecration of this troop of fifty girls composes an ode in which he addresses the latter thus : "O young girls, who receive all strangers and give them hospitality, priestesses of the goddess Pytho in the rich Corinth, it is you who by burning incense before the image and invoking the mother of loves, win for us often her celestial aid and procure for us the sweet moments which we taste upon the voluptuous couches where the tender fruit of beauty is plucked."

This consecration of young virgins and harlots to the goddess was most probably an invention of and a special characteristic with the Hellenic worship. Image worship was unknown during the Epic age in India, and the time of its inception here must be sought for somewhere at the middle of the Pauranic age when Hinduism was already in a high tension with Buddhism, though phallic worship had been gradually gaining ground since the times of the Vedas. It is to be remembered in this

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\* Iliad, IX.

connection that iconolatry either originated or came to stay in India after the invasion of Alexander and that the idea of *Devadashi* in the temples was not materialised until after the Greek influence had found a distinct footing here.

Guest and sacred prostitutions, however, with all their concomitant evils, reigned for centuries in early Greece until the time the great Republican legislator Solon established in the heart of Athens a splendid public brothel (*Dictæron*) peopled with handsome slave-girls (*Dictæriades*) purchased with state-funds. Here any Athenian citizen could come and enjoy venal pleasures paying a small toll at the gates of this ill-famed house. Thus Solon caused a *Charter of libertinism* to be issued by the state, for the alleged welfare of the ebullient youth "who could not restrain itself from obeying the most imperious laws of nature." But with the establishment of legal prostitution, marriage-laws were made more rigorous than ever and a similar salutary restraint upon the morals of married women was placed on the lines of Moses and Deerghatama.

Legal prostitution soon found favour with the Ionic world and a century after Solon's death the courtezans had made inroads from all sides into the heart of the Greek society. Hippius and Hipparchus, sons of the tyrant Pisistratus who usurped the government of Athens about five centuries and a half before the Christian era, established public festivals in which, to use Plutarch's expression, the public women came in waves and shared the same table with all classes of ladies and gentlemen. Though the domestic fireside remained mostly inviolable, public necessity by degrees created *dictærons* in great numbers round which an eternal orgy of the worst type was surging. Prostitution was looked upon as a necessary evil by the Greek Republic and many persons who had a hand in public government spoke much of the courtezans, some blaming and others praising them\*.

In Greece even over five centuries before the Christian era,

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\* *Athenæus*, Bk. XIII, Chap. 6.

there were three principal classes of prostitute with more or less distinct characters : (1) the *Dicteriades* (2) the *Auletrides* and (3) the *Hetairæ*. The *Hetairæ* were queens of the three and commanded the greatest admiration of the intelligensia. They were not to be had only for coins, and in the exercise of their calling they best regarded their individual preferences and aversions. They had physical charms, a fair degree of education, polished manners, the gift of the gab and repartee and a decent mode of living which went a great way to make them inevitable favourites of the most eminent men of Greece. The silken nets of the *hetairæ* practically eclipsed the very existence of the legitimate wives who from the narrow limits of their role inspired in their husbands no feeling beyond that of a cold esteem, if not complete abnegation. The *hetairæ*, on the other hand, gave unsparing inspiration to the writers, dramatists, sculptors, philosophers, politicians and leaders, who under many circumstances were guided by their advice. How the philosoph-hetaira Aspasia had enchanted the great general and popular leader Pericles, and how she exercised an insalubrious influence over the laws, manners and customs of the Athenians, has been related too often in the historical literature of the world. That both Socrates and his notorious pupil Alcibiades used to fill many vacant hours of Aspasia with their philosophy on erotic subjects and their physiological demonstrations, has been well attested by Plato and Hermesianax.

The cynic Crates, the optimist Epicurus, the pessimist Diogenes, orators like Hyperides and Demosthenes, sophists like Aristippus and Stilpon, artists like Pausias and Paraxiteles, poets like Sophocles and Aristophanes were all distinguished in their times for their love-adventures and public scandals with all classes of lecheresses. The mighty Alexander took along with him a train of famous beauties in his memorable expedition, Thais becoming his most favourite mistress.

Phryne, a common strumpet of Corinth had amassed a king's fortune, and to her memory a golden statue was erected and placed between the statues of two kings, Archinamus of Lacedæmonia and Phillip of Macedonia. The Philosopher Crates

pointing to this statue used to exclaim: "Behold, a monument to the immortal immorality of Greece\*!" Two other colossal monuments with nice architectural beauty were erected at Babylon and Athens over the remains of Pythionice, a mistress of Harpalus, Alexander's high treasurer, at a modest cost of about Rs. 10,00,000 (£ 77,000)! To crown all, some bastards of Greece can be counted amongst the kings, philosophers, generals and leaders. Themistocles, a towering personality of his time, was a prostitute's son, who openly "advertised his birth by promenading in a magnificent chariot drawn by four hetairæ as his steeds.†"

The most capricious goddess Aphrodite with a divine retinue all equally patronising the cult of lechery, made an intensive campaign from one corner of the world to the other during the age within our purview. With the change of climate they often changed their names and their forms without of course changing their characters. Either sacred or guest-prostitution was not unknown in primitive Italy before the foundation of Rome. Bestiality and pederasty were the most common vices of this lubricious people who in their savage culture knew no religious or moral restraint‡. The twin-brothers Remus and Romulus, the founders of Rome, are said to have been nourished by a she-wolf after they were cast off as new-born babes. But if we are to believe late† historians like Aurelius Victor, Aulus Gellius and Macrobius, this wolf was no better than a rustic whore named Acca Laurentia who was known all over the neighbourhood by her nick-name *Lupa* i. e. a she-wolf. She possessed, in consequence of bartering away her beauty to the rich farmers, the vast tract of land surrounded by seven hills which she bequeathed to her adopted sons and on which was founded the city of Rome. The hut which Laurentia lived in, was termed *Lupanar* and this was afterwards applied to all public retreats of debau-

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\* (1) *Dialogues and Discourse on those Who Serve the Great*—Lucian.

(2) *Letters*—Alciphron.

(3) *History of Prostitution*—Dr. W. M. Sanger (q. v.)

† Ditto—Paul Lecroix, Vol. 1, P. 83.

‡ *Op. Cit.* P. 195.

chery. King Romulus instituted in grateful memory of his foster-mother an annual festival called *Lupercalia*.

The remarkably fascinating harlot Flora who had reverentially espoused the surname of *Laurentia* acquired immense fortune by her sordid commerce. She left the whole fortune as a legacy with the state to be utilised in a public cause. The Roman Senate accepted it without a shrug of shame and introduced the *Floralia* festival. Thus the magnanimous courtesan's memory was apotheosised and her generosity perpetuated. All decent people as well as the women of the town participated in the festival, during which there was a regular procession of the rarest beauties of the city—semi-nude, hilarious and decked with ornaments of flowers and jewels. They would assemble in the Circus under the gloating eyes of the people and divested of their habits dance furiously with various lascivious undulations which drew deafening roars of applause from the vast concourse. This demonstration reached its climax when amidst the sound of trumpets and tambours most of the spectators rushed into the arena and brought a detumescence on their excited souls by openly entering into a commerce with the women.

Venus with various sobriquets was reigning supreme all over the land and the courtesans with their customers always clustered round it to pay their veneration and take their pleasure. The statues of the obscene gods, Pan, Bacchus, Priapus, Cupid, Mutunus, Tutana installed in lofty temples and public squares were equally respected by the Roman matrons, who sacrificed all modesty and sense of decency in their devotions. The "Priapus cake" about the actual size of a male and a female organs formed the worthiest offering analogous to the *Purodah* of the Vedic sacrifice. It is a known fact of History that every Roman maiden had to seat herself upon the *membrum virile* of the statue of Priapus or Mutunus and to physically sacrifice her virginity to the gods\*.

Numa Pompilius and Servius Tullius, the second and the third

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\* *Prehistoric Anthropological Studies*—W. Schwartz. p. 278 (Berlin, 1884).

kings of ancient Rome may appropriately be compared to Moses and Deerghatama as far as the establishment of coercive marriage morals and female chastity are concerned. Before the three kings promiscuity was practised almost openly by all classes of people at religious festivals under the surveillance of the priests, and secretly at other times. Marriage was regarded nothing more than a violable contract, and concubinage was greatly patronised. Romulus though established *Confarreatio* marriage\* instilling into it a sort of legitimate solemnity and ensuring almost equal rights and responsibility on the couple consistent with the spirit of Shwetaketu's legislation, yet he did not forget dexterously to place his own sex on a higher pedestal. Adultery was made a feasible cause of divorce for a wife, but the husband could demand it under any of these three circumstances, such as, adultery, poisoning of the children and domestic theft. The law and custom soon after gave the husband supreme right of life and death over his wife and children. He could kill his wife in the act of adultery, while the latter did not dare touch him while in the arms of another woman.

Among the *plebians* chiefly two kinds of legal marriage were in vogue, one called *coemptio* and the other *usucapio*. The former may be said to be the antipodal form of sale-marriage of the early Teutons or Indian *Asura*-marriage in as much as the bride had to pay a few pieces of coin to her husband. *Usucapio* was in fact a form of legalised concubinage. The prologue of this unceremonious marriage consisted in the couple's keeping house together in a full marital state for one year, after which they could part as bachelor and maid or the marriage would have been deemed as definite and complete. The wife during the probationary period was not allowed to sleep out of his pseudo-husband's house more than three nights in succession. This marriage was afterwards sanctioned by the law of the Twelve Tables as a civil institution like all other forms.

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\* It was a mode of marriage contracted between two *patrician* bachelor and maid and made in the presence of a high priest and ten patrician witnesses, at which a loaf of wheat-bread was eaten by the bridal pair at the same time, as a sign of confirmed alliance on equal terms.

It took a longer time to make the morals of the Romans than to make Rome. Legal prostitution, although it remained for centuries beyond the pale of legal recognition and police regulations, flourished side by side with "sacred lewdness" and concubinage. The continual wars of Rome with the neighbouring kingdoms and countries brought thousands of women prisoners who were either appropriated to the kings and army-officers or sold as slaves. The *patricians* kept them not only as concubines but married them in large numbers so much so that the Decemvirs were constrained to promulgate the regulation: "It shall not be permitted to patricians to contract marriage with the plebians." For a long time concubinage was regarded as a semi-marriage, a temporary contract, subject to breach by the fancy of one of the contracting parties. The concubine enjoyed almost the same rights as the legitimate wife, and children born of this 'domestic prostitution', became, nevertheless, eligible for being legitimised.

Although there was not a class of refined prostitutes like the *hetairæ* of Greece, there were two distinct classes essentially different in character in the Roman cities: (1) the *meretrices* or whores who kept their doors open only at night, and (2) the *prostibulæ* or prostitutes who devoted themselves night and day to their ignominious trade. Many of the *meretrices* lived as decent women or as "faithful" wives during day, and at night drawing their togas over their faces came to the *lupanar* to practise their clandestine trade within a limited circle of customers; they never stood or walked on the streets to solicit the patronage of the passers-by. The Romans were more materialistic, more vulgar than the Greeks and not satisfied with the refinements of love's pleasures, they always looked about for the grossest and the most "monstrously varied" outlets of their crude passion. Masculine prostitution was a thriving commerce in some of the Italian cities at the time. If the least credence can be attached to the *Satires* of Juvenal and the *Epigrams* of Martial, any Roman citizen with a commendable character and elevated social position, was free to visit a house of male prostitution in order to "demand the pleasures which the feminine could give them",



or at best to keep a seraglio of young slaves in his house if at all his purse permitted. In another chapter we shall give a bird's eye view on how the Roman morals were incredibly degraded during the later part of the Republic and under the Emperors.

From times unknown the Gallic nobles had been enjoying the privilege of maintaining big gynæcia in their country-houses which embraced the whole population of married and unmarried women ; from among them the wanton lords could choose any at their sweet pleasure for their nocturnal couch. Though from the meagre data available from the ancient Greek and Roman authorities, one may be certain that legal prostitution did not exist among the Gauls and Cimbri before the Roman conquest, yet it is not difficult to form a hypothesis to show the prevalence of religious prostitution amongst them from the primitive times. Comparative chastity obtained in their society and sexual promiscuity was well-nigh unknown though polygamy was widely practised, before these barbarous races came in contact with the Latin culture.

Prostitutes and concubines formed the rear-guard of a king's retinue or a soldiery in all ancient countries as in India. The Romans, the Greeks and specially the Carlovingians and the Merovingians, not to speak of the Franks, Teutons, Goths and Normans, were all accustomed to take their wives and concubines with them in battle-fields ; and wherever they were lacking, the captured women of the enemy-land filled the gaps. Even several centuries after, in the first Crusade of Saint Louise about 1500 women followed the holy army mostly in the guise of men to feed the fires of military lubricity\*. The barons set up brothels for themselves about their tents at the Land of the Holy Sepulchre, and when women were wanting, fresh contingents were sent for from Europe†. We shall see later *en passant* how the prostitutes and vagabonds became a veritable nuisance to the soldiery of the Middle Age and how they were suppressed.

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\* Vide S. Putnam's footnote on p. 731 of Vol. I of Lecroix's *Histoire de la Prostitution*.

† *Histoire des Gaules*, Vol. XIV. p. 684.

In Vedic India polyandry and polygamy were almost the prevailing custom, but the succeeding Epic age leaves them far behind and weds itself to a monogamic ideal, although it is not yet wholly clarified and placed on a common solid footing. We have already touched upon the custom that a husband could easily permit his wife to seek temporarily another qualified man only of course to have "seeds" implanted in her for the sake of an offspring, and that a wife who had sexual congress with not more than four persons with the ostensible purpose of procreation was seldom renounced by the husband. Divorce, judicial separation and widow-remarriage were to be found in the statute books, but they were rarely taken recourse to. But the *Levirate* form of marriage was extant among all castes and classes of Hindus long after the Christian Era. The woman who had four lovers other than her legitimate husband was called a "Swairinee"\*, and she could enjoy all rights and liberties on an equal footing with other strictly chaste wives. The kings, generals, landlords and nobles possessed as a matter of right more than one wife and many concubines in addition as those of the rest of the world; but the *Rishis* and ordinary people in the age under review seldom permitted themselves this luxury. Their economic condition and moral consistency stood as a matter of fact in their way; and if they have anywhere shewn themselves as voluntary victims to the caresses of a courtesan or a concubine, it should rather be entertained as illustrations of honourable exceptions than those of a general rule.

Such an outstanding exception was Draupadee to the general rule of monandry. Though polyandry and polygyny have been practised by some of the primitive tribes of South India and North-eastern Himālayas down to the Twentieth Century, the former was at least a closed chapter with the pure Aryans in the Epic age. Arjuna in a Brahmin's garb won Draupadee in an open 'marriage-contest' by his unsurpassable feats

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\* The word sometimes was used for a wife who had been married to four husbands one after the other; so it can be construed by implication that a woman if she at all wanted to remain a lady could not take more than four husbands in her life-time.

of archery. But the other four brothers greatly took to her, and with the permission of their mother they settled to share Draupadee in common with Arjuna as her husbands, specially when the latter readily agreed to it\*. Drūpada though at first unwilling to give his daughter in marriage with the five brothers at a time was eventually prevailed upon by Judhisthira to give his consent, the latter having cited precedents from ancient historical traditions in support of this polyandrical alliance. But this marriage gave rise to much adverse criticism and strong feelings in many quarters, which shows that the custom was not in vogue at the time. When Bidur and Bikarna were raising vehement protest against the most insulting treatment on Draupadee, Karna who was still ignorant that he was the uterine brother of the Pandavas gave cogent argument in its defence and remarked: "The gods have ordained one husband for each woman, but Draupadee in contravention of the divine law has given herself in marriage with many (i. e. more than four), so she is no doubt a *bārastree* (whore). No wonder that a prostitute should be dragged into the court-chamber and denuded before all eyes †!"

Towards the close of the age, guest-prostitution became conspicuous by its absence and sacred prostitution was almost reduced to nonentity. The cult of virginity was becoming fast a voluntary and consistent institution as far as the common run was concerned. Adultery was although not looked upon with plausibility, human weakness was accorded due concession and illigetimacy under certain circumstances approved by the society and the state as well. As the status of the *kaneen-putra*, *gurhotpanna-putra* and other natural children were mostly ratified by the law, abortion and infanticide were well-nigh unknown. The virgins and matrons were naturally respected high and low, and the law protected the respective interests of respectable and fallen women with equal judiciousness, as will be evinced in a succeeding chapter. Though almost absolute tolerance was growing up around the practice of legal prostitution,

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\* *The Mahabharata* (Bengali edition by K. P. Sinha), Adi Parva, Chapter CLMXI.

† *Op. cit.*, Sabha Parva, Chapter, LXVI.

yet the civil laws regulated it to some extent and prohibited it under certain circumstances. One who has thoroughly studied the Hindu Epics, will be able to testify to the high moral tone they are all through resounding with, specially in its didactic portions. The mytho-historical elements have recorded many characters who by their austere modes of living went far above all temptations of the flesh and who like Xenocrates could remain icy cold under the animating embraces of the divine courtezans.

We must close this chapter with one or two of such glorious instances of Epic virtue which may well be taken as a side-issue of our main theme.

There was a great devotee named Twastri who out of wrath towards Indra created a son with three heads. The most dignified place occupied by Indra was aspired by this weird youth called Trishira and he devoted himself to severe religious practices to get the upper hand of the Eternal Lord of heaven. He became a strict devotee of Brahmā, the Creator, commanding wonderful self-control and self-confidence. Indra, on the other hand, was growing impatient and despondent. At last he wanted to play his last trumps and engaged the heavenly *hetairæ* in seducing the menacing Trishira into the snares of sexual pleasures so that he might thereby lose all his supernatural acquirements. The Lord speaks to them thus : "Be quick, go and delay not in decoying him ; you who have beautiful hips, bedeck yourselves in necklaces and costly pearls in such a way that his desires may easily be excited. Decoy him at any cost with all the gestures of lust marked with every sort of fascination, and allay my fear."

Thus deputed by Indra, the lovely courtesans approached Trishira and by means of various lascivious arts tried to rouse him. They displayed their physical beauty as Mother Nature endowed them with, made all sorts flirtative movements, danced and sang. But Trishira sat adamant like a statue ; he looked at these damsels of divine pleasure with lack-lustre eyes, without a single tingle of excitement in his heart. "Having brought his senses under his control, he was in point of

## CHAPTER IV.

### INDRA AND THE HEAVENLY HETAIRÆ

The most primitive man of the stone age, say the lisping *troglodites* had little mental disposition to speculate beyond his most immediate wants, those of satisfying hunger and lust. In this state he lived hundreds of thousands of years till he felt a need to understand nature about him and ultimately the one *within* him. The most crude idea of nature's identity and workings gave birth to the first religious sentiments of man who either out of a feeling of fear, helplessness or wonder was disposed to ascribe volition and thought to its uncontrollable forces and sought more than one means to propitiate them. Thus an almost undefined naturism grew, and the utility of prayers, offerings and worship came to be recognised. It was very natural for the ancient people to attribute their own characteristics of life to all the phenomena of nature, thus creating in his own mind various forms of gods presiding over rain, clouds, wind, storms, rivers, ocean, sun, moon, stars and what not. These gods though were said to be endowed with supernatural powers, were in many respects analogous to man and far from being of an asexual nature were incredibly salacious.

So we find that our primitive forefathers, when their mental calibre had sufficiently been organised, *created gods in their own image*. The deification of the elementary forces and

humanisation of gods in India though culminated in a visible growth of a high pantheistic conception, yet in the course of evolution they afforded opportunities to the intelligent people to give full play to their poetic imagination and weave out a net of myths and fables to which the plebs could easily lend their credulity. If the modern knowledge of psycho-analysis be focussed on all the mythological stories and sagas of the world, they will at the first instance show a common strain and motivation of thought which does not necessarily prove that one borrowed matters and ideas from the other, but which only shows that the collective psyche in a certain stage of development think in the same way all over the world. Most of the early myths in India as in the other parts of the world delineate the motley loves and wars of gods, men and demons. The love-life of man was still far from having been tempered by intellectual refinements and was grossly physical and monstrously unstable, though the social potentates were trying to place some limitation on its general misuse.

Which man could not perform himself from moral restraint or physical incapacity, he would naturally have that done by his gods who were deemed in every respect above reserve or reproach. In this way he has made his gods extremely forward and free in affairs of love just as he wished himself to be, and identifying himself with the gods, he could psychically derive a gratification of his inordinate sexual desire. The analyst cannot but admire the artistic symbolism of mythical wars. Some of these as are found in the Rigveda can no doubt be diagnosed as allegorical account of the wars of the elements ; some stories on the other hand can be recognised as only a physical, ethical or historical explanation of the Universal laws. But there are many which depict in glaring clarity the conflict of the *Ego* and the sexual impulse, the struggle with different complexes, especially those of the *Œdipus* and the *Electra*, the gods and goddesses taking the place of fathers and mothers and the multi-shaped demons representing the redoubtable *libido*.\*

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\* (1) *Dreams and Myths*—Karl Abraham ; (2) *The Myth of the Birth of the Hero*—Otto Rank (q. v.)

The psycho-analysis of myths shows the most primitive wishes and fears of mankind under a variety of disguise. The mechanism of the disguise, as also the *motif* for it, is extremely similar to that of dreams. Myths, like dreams, represent the hidden fulfilment of one's repressed wishes, but the libido seldom changes into fear by the process of repression as in the latter. The energies that could not be transmuted into the real tasks and interests of life were expressed in the wish-fulfilment of myths. "The higher religions emancipated themselves from their early mythological nature both by their concern about the affairs of real life and by their higher ethical achievements \*". In the Greek and Indian mythology, one finds that the family nature of its content is everywhere manifest, and the chief themes therein are characteristic of the infantile life that persists in the adult unconscious. Those that are conversant with the theory of Freud's "Family Romance of Children" will readily accept the view that the myths are the glorified substitutes for members of the individual family. When many short-comings had been observed in the family patriarch, the attributes of perfection were first incorporated in the clan-chief or king and then in an intangible figure who became the omnipotent, omniscient Lord, our Eternal Father in heaven. Thus fancy played its full part in weaving out stories about God, His subordinates and His heavenly kingdom. These fancies are but the waking dreams of the intelligent but hysterical or neurotic mind which by these means obtains wish-gratifications "emanating from privation and longing." They are filled with ideas frequently of a triumphant content and fulfill through the magic power of their creative force what actual life has denied them†. In this way a pantheon and a theogony came into existence among all the ancient civilisations of the world.

\* *Psycho-Analysis*—Earnest Jones. M. D. (Earnest Benn publication) pp. 70—71.

† (1) *Psycho-Analysis: Its Theory and Practical Application*—A. A. Brill, M. D. p. 218.

(2) *Critique of Love*—Fritz Wittels. (The Macaulay Co.) p. 154.

We know that the earliest idea of Godhead in India grew around Indra. He was invested with the control of the rain, the clouds and the sun, the three fundamental necessities with the agrarian Aryans. Then many other gods, such as Varuna, Aswinis, Marūta, Rūdra, Hūtāshana, Soma, Vishnū, Brahmā and a host of others came into being much from internal necessities and external examples or suggestions. Throughout the long Vedic age, Indra was the supreme God and he was depicted at various stages in various colours according to the conception of the contemporary *Rishis*. From the times of the Epics Indra is gradually relegated to the background, and Brahmā, Vishnū and Shiva instated in his place. Nevertheless upto the end of the Paurāṇic age, he remains the sovereign lord of the "primitive" heaven, in the midst of his celestial nymphs, the *apsarās* and untold luxuries, though newer and greater heavens (लोक) were conceived for his more powerful competitors. He was, moreover unsurpassably popular with the masses, even when the worship of the Trinity—Brahmā, Vishnū and Shiva was firmly established. The reasons for it lie embedded in the very life-history of this most primordial God, in as much as it has furnished a most striking analogy to the ideals, inclinations and aspirations of the plebian of all ages.

Indra is an indefatigable warrior and shrewd politician as he is an incorrigibly lewd and pleasure-seeking being. The *apsarās* are his greatest acquisitions with whom he spends many idle hours in an enviable environment of hilarity. Many *Munis* and *Rishis* have tried almost in vain to draw a picture of the inconceivable beauty of these *apsarās* and some have ventured uselessly to set up a plausible genesis of them. According to the Sambhava Parva of the Mahabharata, (Chap. LXV Sl. 49-51,) some of the *apsarās* are the progeny of a good lady, Pradhā, by the celestial Rishi Kashyapa. Arunā, Rakshitā, Rambhā. Monoramā, Keshinee, Sūbāhū, Sūratā, Alambūshā, Misrakeshi and Vidyūtparnā are the descendents of this pair. The rest excepting one or two are said to be the offspring of Muni Kapila. The stars amongst these heavenly hetairæ are Urvashi\*, Menakā, Tilottamā, Rambhā and

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\* The later traditionists (*Devi Pūgabat*, 4th Skandha, 6th Chap.) have



Ghrītāchee\*. The Vedas, the Epics and the Purānas are overflowing with the descriptions of their delightful exploits with the friends and foes of Indra, the sages and the kings.

These heavenly courtesans know neither worry nor anxiety, neither bereavement nor infirmity ; and like never-fading flowers they shine forth eternally in pristine grace and glory in the pleasure-garden of the Immortal King. With their silken ebony hair flowing over their bonny back and reaching down up to their knees, exquisitely symmetrical lineament, lustrous eyes often veiled with an amorous langour, finely-cut proud nose, velvety cheeks tenderer than the blossom of the peach, ever-moist cherry lips, soft shapely hands like the lilac, the delicate and admirably tapering fingers with the clear oval markings on the nails comparable only to the inner petals of a rose, the round chiselled-out neck, the well-formed ivory bosom which even in its faint outlines thrills the heart of every gazer, the broad undulating hips, slender and supple waist, elegantly aristocratic thighs and a complexion of the night-jasmine with a tinge of the lily of the valley, these *apsarās* were the instruments *par excellence* of divine dissipation.

Their sparkling *bon mot*, their melodious voice, their voluptuous gaits, their coquettish laugh, either in music or in dancing their marvellous mastery over measures and their sweet capriciousness of love, made not only the gods to run eternally after them with a never-fulfilled desire like the Greek Endymion, but the

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concocted a nice story about Urvashi's descent. God Vishnu or Narayana by slapping the upper part of his thighs ( *उर* ) one day created a most fascinating maiden out of his divine body. This maiden was called by him Urvashi. She was first kept by the two brothers *Mitra* (sun-god) and *Varuna* (water-god) by whom she had had two sons, *Agastya* and *Vasistha*, both of them having been famous hymn-makers and pious Brahmins. That they were born of the courtesan Urvashi has not only been narrated by the Puranas (Cf. "*Padma Purana*," Sr. Kh. 46th Ch.) but had been recorded in the Rigveda long before (M. 7. C. 33, Rik. xi).

\* The Mahābharata has recorded the names of forty two *apsaras* in all. Besides those mentioned above, there were twenty eight others, such as, Soma, Anavadya, Amvika, Adrika, Gunavara, Supriya, Kamyā, Ritusthala, Ashita, Dhatree, Surasa, Pramathinee, Karnika, Viswachee, Angsu, Voga, Marichee, Janapadi, Sugandha and a few others. [Mbh, A.P. CXXIII. Eng. version by M. N. Dutta.]

mortal men also became mad in aspiring after their charming hospitality. The Rishis and the kings sometimes visited Indra's *Swarga* in their physical body; even the staunchest moralists among them desired nothing from Indra but the exclusive possession of one or more *apsarās* for a few nights. These heavenly women of pleasure often enjoyed the liberty to visit the earth either at their sweet pleasure or at Indra's insinuation and to choose any handsome cavalier for their fleeting fancy. Sometimes they were deputed to spoil the austerities of a Rishi or a king who threatened to become the rival of Indra. They were, properly speaking, not common whores of heaven, but something like a medley of ancient Greek hetairæ and modern Indian *Baijoo*, and they could not be tempted to bestow their venal pleasures to the highest bidder if they wished it to be.

Truly the *apsarās* were in the keeping of the Lord of heaven, yet they could not be forced to yield to his wanton caress in season and out of season to the utter disregard of their sentiments. They were destined no doubt to minister unto Indra and his august satellites principally by means of their music and dancing and secondarily by yielding the body, in which their preferences and aversions were frequently respected. They were the highest embodiment of the conception of a courtesan in whom we find all that go to make a perfect womanhood barring chastity. They held free license to fall in love and sport with any mortal or celestial that kindled a desire in her. An *apsarā* was, after all, amenable to the fling of Cupid's dart and often liked to descend into the mundane vale of tears to taste mortal love's bereavement, anxieties, doubts and fears. In the Epics and the Purānas we see not a few instances in which the celestial hetaira has married a terrestrial king or a squeamish sage and for hundreds of years been sheltering in the haven of the lover's embraces.

Some of these courtesans who once lay veiled by their wavy hairs only on feather-beds strewn with ever-fragrant roses beneath broad purple curtains with their bracelets of rubies and necklace of huge pearls under the shadow of a flaming spangle, have come down quite sick in search of a coarser romance—a blanket-bed in a forest-hut. She like the wanton wind could pass over a

garden of night-queens and gardenia or through a thicket of hawthorns at her sweet pleasure with none to call them strictly in question. Even the Sovereign Lord could not force any of them to yield her body to the sensual embraces either of himself or his surrogates. All that he could do was to submit a request which she might deny if her dispositions dictated. Rāvana, the most powerful king of Lankā, had to shoulder heavy penalties all his life for forcing Rambhā to take his diabolical hospitality and ravishing her consecutively for three days and as many nights.

The sons and daughters of the *apsaras* born in earth were always given a due recognition ; some of them, on the contrary, rose to the highest ranks of society. The high note of appreciation and regard which the contemporary society had accorded to the daughters of these divine demi-monde can best be judged from the descriptions of the beautiful love-story of Rūrū and Pramadbārā. The latter was the daughter of the Apsarā Menakā by a Gandharva king, Viswavasū by name. Menakā had left the new-born babe in a lonely place near a river-bank to seek its own fate. Rishi Sthulakesha came there to perform his morning ablutions and came by the baby wrapped in a divine splendour crying in the wilderness. Out of compassion he picked up the foundling and took it home. She grew up like the waxing moon into a lovely lady whom the Rishi named Pramadbārā. One day Rūrū, the son of Pramati and the grandson of Muni Vrigu accidentally came to Sthulakesha's hermitage and fell forthwith in love with the budding beauty. A negotiation was soon after opened between Pramati and Sthulakesha in prospect of an alliance and both parties came to an agreement. A formal betrothal ceremony took place in time.

But as ill-luck would have it, one day when Pramadbārā was playing with her companions, she was bitten by a venomous snake and fell down dead then and there. Rūrū was so much afflicted with the news of his fiancée's death that sitting by the side of the corpse and without food and drink he began to supplicate the gods for the restoration of Pramadbārā's life. At last an angel came down from heaven and said unto this devout lover :

"Well Prince, you are striving after an impossibility. No mortal once dead can be restored to life. No man or woman when his or her days have run out, can remain in this earth to enjoy eternal bliss. But gods have been moved by your sincere supplications and deigned to bestow on you a provisional favour. If you agree to sacrificing half the span of your life, Pramadbārā may be rehabilitated with that and come to life again." Rūrū, forthwith agreed and Pramadbārā rose up as if from a hypnotic trance. A few days after, they were united in marriage and the pair passed their days in an uninterrupted beatitude till the last breath.

The story has been described in some detail to give an impression of the estimation that the most debonair people entertained for the beautiful accomplished daughters of the *apsarā*. To part with a moiety of one's longevity with alacrity is no doubt a sacrifice unique in the historical traditions of love. Some of the *apsaras* themselves and their daughters became the queens of the best-known kingdoms of ancient India, not to speak of others who embellished the gynecia of the aristocracy for years together. A few of the *apsaras* used to command respect for their high intellectual attainments and varied experience of life. Even so profoundly learned a Rishi as Nārada sometimes valued their opinion which has been recorded in the *Mahābhārata* (Anushāsana Parva, Ch. XXXVIII).

Nārada visits an *apsara*, Panchasūdhā by name and requests her to enlighten him on the 'psycho-sexual life of the women. Her discourse though embodied in a few laconic lines, is as wonderfully expressive as over-bearingly dogmatic. Women are, she proceeds to relate, always fickle-minded. They are never satiated with men and as soon as they come across a beautiful youth, their mind atonce runs after him with avidity. They prize the companionship of the other sex more than anything else. They may, Panchasūdhā goes on, forsake a loving ideal husband out of wrath, and can cast off all inherent modesty or social conventionality to win the favour of an unmitigated wretch. They always inwardly revolt against the restraints placed on them (though outwardly they may accept them with a placid

simper), and so forth. This is no doubt an incomplete picture of the psychology of the fair sex, though her statements have furnished some undeniable truths.

Menakā's another daughter by Rishi Vishwāmitra was Shakūntalā—the pure, innocent and chaste wife of King Dūshmanta and the immortal theme of poet Kalidāsa's monumental drama of international fame. Vishwāmitra by his severe ascetism becomes a store-house of miraculous powers. Indra apprehends a trouble from him as this Rishi begins to send up quite undeserving men of his camp to heaven and on the former's refusal to entertain them, the imperious sage threatens to create a second heaven by his supernatural force. The shrewd king, as is his wont, atonce charges Menakā to take up the delicate task of annulling the ascetic power of the Rishi. But Menakā fears the wrath of the sage who in rage might reduce her to atoms. Indra sends along with her the gods of love and wind to assist her in the diplomatic mission. Menakā, thus protected, comes down to the forest of Vishwāmitra who was then performing his diurnal prayers ; she has put on nothing in the way of vestment save and except a flowing diaphanous robe which furnished very little obstruction to the eyes. The bewitching beauty came strutting along the forest-tract and with a charming nod began to dance before him.

Vishwāmitra gives her but a passing notice at first, but finally when the god of wind blows her subtle garments away and exposes the daughter of Eve in her mother's costume, the wily courtesan bending a little to cover the centre of her mock modesty with the palms of her hands, the grim austerity of the Rishi melts a little as it were. Just at that moment the god *Eros* becomes busy with his flower-laden shafis. Then the phantom of this dancing nudity penetrated into every ramification of the Rishi's nerves and exerted an overbearing influence on his brain. The Rishi turns his head away from his sacrificial fire and sets bewildered to feasting his eyes on Menakā's charms. To make a long story short, Vishwāmitra implored her rapturous favour but for once, which was all she wanted. This incongruous pair spent together quite an æon in a blissful embrace, during which

Shakūntalā came into being. This suckling of shame was also cast off by its meretricious mother, when Vishwāmītra refused to nurture it in his holy hermitage\*.

Menakā having taken her departure to heaven, Vishwāmītra came to his senses and renewed his ascetic life from the very alphabet. His assiduous meditations and mortifications again made Indra ill at ease who set a second trap for this ambitious Rishi. This time the celebrated Rambhā was selected. She also like Menakā wished some powerful god to accompany her, upon which Indra himself volunteered his services. He transformed himself into a delightful cuckoo and began to strike up melodious notes from a tree near by. The cuckoo's silvery song touched atlast the tender chord of the Rishi's heart and he suddenly awoke from his 'deep meditation. Opening his eyes he found an *apsarā* of exquisite grace dancing in front of him and sonorously singing as if in tune with the twittering "messenger of spring." For a moment the sage was carried away and felt inclined to seek carnal comfort in the arms of this celestial nymph, but he soon came to himself and saw through the sinister motive of Indra. Next moment in the highest pitch of rage he cursed the temptress Rambhā and turned her into a statue. Terrifying Indra in the shape of the cuckoo atonce flew away to heaven to escape the Rishi's all-devouring wrath.

Saradwanta, the son of Gotama, on another occasion, became a menace to the king of heaven by his astounding achievements of asceticism. He was as skilled in the bow and arrows as he was in the *Vedas* and *Vedāngas*. Indra plays his old game again and sends Jānapadee away on the diabolic mission. Clad in a translucent tunic and exposing her slender neck, shapely bosom and seductive ankles to the best of her advantage the *apsarā* puts in an appearance before Saradwanta. The intoxicating charms of the *apsarā* are so appealing that the *Muni* stands there dumb-founded for a time. The bow drops

\* Ashwaghosha advances another view that it was not Menaka but Chritachee who decoyed Vishwamitra and was the mother of Shakuntala (*Vide* his *Buddha-charita*, 17, 20).

from his hand and an electric vibration passes through every fibre of his robust body. He however, offers stout resistance to this divine temptation, but his throttled excitement drives out a jet of semen which falls on the ground. Saradwanta receiving such a castigating warning, atonce runs for all he is worth away from this ominous woman. Thanks to the phantastic imagery of the primitive brains, the "seeds" of Saradwanta split into two and give rise to the twin brother and sister, Kripa and Kripee. These foundlings were taken up by King Shantanu of Hastinapur and since then reared under his roof, the upstart girl in course of time becoming the wife of Professor Drona.

In a like manner when the erudite recluse Bharadwāja sees *apsarā* Ghritāchee wrapped only in her natal linen, bathing in a river, he throws himself headlong into a bonfire of exuberant passion and ejaculates in a measure-bowl in which Drona is said to have been originated. The same Ghritāchee once fired sagacious Vyasa with concupiscence who put his best foot foremost and implanted his seeds down into the womb of the nymph, resulting in course of time in the birth of Shuka\*.

Instances like this can be multiplied to any length. The only truism that floats over all these stories, whether they bear out facts or fibs, that however ruthlessly the sexual impulse be suppressed, it never dies out in the human heart, but manifests itself with a tremendous force some time or other to take its toll with interest.

When the gay Alambūshā appeared before the austere Dadheechi and unfolded her naked charms, his dormant passions could hardly be kept from awakening. His semen spurted out into the bosom of the river Saraswatee which bore him a son,

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\*This is the Pauranic version of the story of Shuka's birth as opposed to the Epic version related in the last chapter. According to Pargiter, Vyasa's wife Arani has been turned into two pieces of wood used for kindling fire, as confusion of person with things was a common tendency of the Brahmin chroniclers, who in this way devised means and methods for fanciful explanations. [Vide his "*Ancient Historical Traditions*," p. 136.]

whom the father welcomed in joy. Kashyapa (Vivandaka) while bathing in a stream saw the divine Urvashi glide past over his head in the sky and in a fit of tense excitement he ejaculated into the water. Just at that moment a roe was drinking water from the stream and the Rishi's semen found its way into her belly with the result that Rishyasringa was conceived\*.

In spite of his beautiful and frigidly chaste wife Sachee and his host of heavenly hetairæ, Indra is frequently drawn to the women of the earth. Everywhere in the three worlds, he sniffs about for young handsome ladies and changes himself into any shape to enjoy them to his full satisfaction just like his foreign brothers Jupiter and Odin. Just as Zeus once came to seek the favour of Amphitryon's wife in the shape of her husband, so did Indra ravish Ahalyā in the form of her husband Gautama. Thus this all-mighty god set a bad example to his subjects at large, and brought the prurient habit of making an *affair d'amour* with other men's wives into the world, which according to Rāmāyana (Canto VII, 30-33) spread an infection among all classes of mankind. To put it in other words, Aryan civilisation could neither outgrow nor outwit the primitive instincts of man as no civilisation has yet been able to do, and the polygamous instinct of man asserted itself through the agency of gods who at least rendered a metaphysical satisfaction to the masses when physical satisfaction was not possible. Otherwise there can be no other reason for colouring Indra as an ever-potent god who with his faithful wife and a troop of classic courtezans, runs after any beautiful woman that falls in with his fancy. Any ruse or subterfuge is good enough for him so long he can attain his sinister end. His sensual nature, like an ever-flaming forge, is always ready for action and surpasses all limits of decency or decorum. Even when he goes to fight the Dānavas, he falls on the two buxom maidens, Devajāni and Sharmisthā, who are at that time going to bathe in the river along with other girls. He cannot resist the temptation of

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\* (1) *MBh.* II. 110.34 and XIII. 85.17. (2) Weber's *Ind. Studien*, XIV (1875), p. 121. (3) Hartland's *Primit. Patern.* pp. 12 and 23.



feasting his eyes upon these scanty-robed rose-buds, and in the form of wind laughingly blows their flowing dresses away\*.

Arjuna sometime went with his somatic body to heaven to pay a visit to Indra who is said to have been his *de-facto* father. The lord of heaven in order to give his son a fitting reception arranged a festivity to which all the celebrities of heaven were invited. The air vibrated with the melodious songs of the heavenly singers, Gandharvas, to the accompaniment of flutes and lyres ; and the rythmatic dance of the apsarās lent additional charms to this unique occasion. Amongst the ballet-girls was Urvashi, the *prima-donna* of heaven who with an abundance of beautiful black hair flowing down her milk-white shoulders and reaching up to the knees danced the delightful dance of a gypsy frenzied with love. With every step of her measured dance, the ripe enchanting liberal bosom swelled out in bold outlines and a ripple of colour passed over from the shapely neck to the firm, throbbing and lovely breasts, almost bare, save for a transparent veil which offered no resistance to the eyes to see the nipples maintaining their pleasing eminence like the buds of pink-roses about to blossom. As she wheeled round and round with her vapourous vestment flowing about in the air, displaying the polished skin of the hue of a lily, a supple waist, broad hips, and a pair of shapely agile legs and all gazes centred on her, she commanded universal applause. Arjuna of all took particular interest in her as he was probably for the first time in his life witnessing the decoying dance of a celestial nymph. Indra took note of this and a great connoisseur that he was of female beauty, thought that his worthy son had taken a fancy to this heavenly courtesan and inwardly felicitated him on his choice. To satisfy the suspected salacity of his son, he requested Urvashi through Gandharva Chitrasena to entertain Arjuna for the night.

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\* Compare with this the story of Priapus and Cybele of ancient Rome. Goddess Cybele was sleeping in an isolated grotto, and the indiscreet Zephyr was amusing himself by lifting the folds of her light linen. Priapus, the passion-god was passing by that way and he had no sooner seen her in this position than he set about to profit by the occasion.

For a long time past Urvashi cherished in the heart of her hearts a fond desire of possessing Arjuna ; and when Indra's approval came to her quite uncalled-for, she only too readily nodded assent. Then Urvashi, hurriedly took a bath and adorned herself with splendid ornaments and charming sweet-scented garlands. Her heart was being ruthlessly pierced by the arrows of the god of love. Being greatly excited she withdrew her mind from all other objects, and with her imagination highly inflamed, she mentally sported with him (Arjuna) in predilection. When the moon was fairly high and the twilight deepened, the high-hipped woman smilingly started towards the abode of *Partha* (Arjuna). She looked extremely beautiful, with her crisp, soft and long *venee* (braids of hair) adorned with bunches of flowers, and with the graceful motions of her eyebrows, with her soft symmetrical poise and moon-like face, she walked on in her charming majesty.

As she was trotting along, her two well-developed and finely tapering breasts, parted by the locket of a golden chain and besmeared with celestial unguentum and fragrant sandal-paste began to vibrate. In consequence of the weight of her protruding breasts, she had to slightly stoop forward at every step displaying the beauty of her waist lined with the three folds. Her fair, high, round and matchless hip which was as wide as two hillocks, the charming abode of the god of love, decked with knotted chains of gold and capable of shaking the austerity of the celestial Rishis, was covered with a thin diaphanous attire. Her feet, with beautiful ankles, with flat soles and bright copper-coloured toes high and concave like the back of a tortoise, looked extremely charming decked in ornaments with rows of tinkling little bells. Exhilarated with the chalices of liquor she had drunk, and excited also by the uncontrollable desire of the flesh, she moved about in faltering steps and looked more beautiful than ever. Notwithstanding there were many wonderful sights in heaven, the *Siddhas*, the *Chāranas*, and the *Gandharvas* considered her to be the most worthy object as that beautiful hetaira passed along the street. The upper half of her body being clad in an attire of fine

texture of lavender colour, she looked like the digit of the moon moving on in the sky covered over by the (passing) fleecy clouds.

Soon the smiling beauty reached the abode of *Fālguni*, the son of Pandu. Coming near the gate, Urvashi sent words to Arjuna through the gate-keeper. Then she entered that brilliant ante-chamber of the guest-house. Arjuna with a dubious heart went forward to receive her. Confronting the charmingly attired smiling Urvashi alone at night, Pārtha closed his eyes as if from a sense of modesty. Then saluting her, he paid her all the compliments as became a superior. Then quoth he : "O foremost of all the famous Apsarās, I salute thee. O celestial lady, what is thy command ? I wait upon thee as a servant."

Having heard the words of Fālguni, Urvashi became deprived of all her senses as it were. She then told him all about her mysterious mission set to it by Chitrasena, the messenger of Lord Indra. Then she added, "O stainless one, O chastiser of foes, thus commanded by Chitrasena as also by your father, I have come to wait upon you. O hero, my heart has long been fascinated with your youth and your virtues. I am under the spell of the love-god. Just fulfill my wish ; I have been cherishing a fond desire for you since I caught a glimpse of you."

Hearing her speak in this way, Arjuna was filled with great shame. He shut his ears with the palms of his hands and said, "O blessed lady, O fair-featured one, it is not proper for me to hear what thou hast said unto me. I consider thee as the wife of my superior. As the illustrious Kuntēe is to me, as Indra's Sachēe is to me, O blessed lady, so art thou to my humble self. There is no doubt about it. O lady of charming smiles, that I did gaze intently at thee is true. But there was a reason for it. I shall tell it unto thee. I looked on at thee with wide expanded eyes in a seraphic delight, only thinking all the while that thou art the mother of the Puru dynasty\*. O blessed Apsarā, thou must

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\* Puru was the progenitor of the Kauravas and Pandavas. King Pururava, a fore-father of Arjuna married the eternal Urvashi centuries before and begot six

not entertain any other feeling towards me than motherly, for thou art superior to my superiors, the perpetuator of my race." At this the whole superstructure of bright hopes Urvashi had built in her ever-green mind, was razed to the ground and merged into nothingness like a dream. She went away baffled and crestfallen. ...

The celestial minstrel Rishi Nārada one day came to the Khāndavanagara, the capital of the five Pandava brothers and incidentally related to them the life-history of Sūnda and Upasūnda and also how Apsarā Tilottamā was created. They were two Asura brothers born of the terrible demon Nikumbha. The two brothers were like two flowers on the same stem and ate off the same dish, drank from the same glass and slept on the same bed. One did nothing against the will of the other and both of them were avowed to a bond of unbroken amity and affection. When Sūnda and Upasūnda were sufficiently grown up, they devoted themselves to severe penances and mortifications in order to extricate a boon from God which would make them invulnerable to all weapons in the three planes. This was no doubt a hard striving for, but their long austerities at last persuaded Brahmā to condescend to bestow the desired boon. Thenceforth the brothers became incapable of being killed by any one except one by the other.

Now they set out to bring the three worlds under their subjection with a large army of Dānavas clad in mails and armed with lances, clubs and maces. Protected by Brahma's benison they attained their end without much ado. Sūnda and Upasūnda took possession of all the wealth of the Devas, the Gandharvas, the Yakshas, the Nāgas, the Rākshashas and the kings, and became exceedingly happy. When they saw they had no rival, like the immortals they began to pass their time in sports and merriments. They derived great pleasure in women, in garlands, in perfumes, in rare

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or seven sons on her. The eldest son Ayu continued the main line of the Paurava dynasty. (Vide *Bṛihadādharmā Purāṇa* X. 11-12; *Līṅga P.* LXVI. 57-58; *MBh* Adi, LXXV etc.) A fuller detail of the Urvashi-Pururava incident will be given in an ensuing chapter.

viands, in choice drinks and in various other articles of luxury. But on the other hand, the whole population of the three worlds were groaning under the tyranny of the usurping brothers. Sacrifice and study had ceased ; kings and Brahmins had been exterminated. The earth had become destitute of festivals and religious sacrifices. All trade and commerce had been stopped, all sacred ceremonies and marriages discontinued. Agriculture was neglected and cattle were not tended. Both cities and hermitages looked deserted and the earth desolate, being covered with only skulls and bones. The whole sky was reverberating with one monotonous cry "Alas ! Alas !".

All the Rishis and holy people of the earth waited upon Brahmā and represented to him in doleful detail the villainous deeds of Sūnda and Upasūnda and finally insisted on an immediate redress of their grievances. Grandsire Brahmā reflected for a moment and then sent for Vishwakarmā, the celestial Chief Engineer. Vishwakarmā, having been ushered into the His presence, the Grandsire commanded him thus : "O great craftsman, create atonce a damsel with beguiling beauty who can enchant any one in heaven and earth." Bowing down to the Divine Grandsire, and receiving his command with a reverential nod, he set at creating a celestial maiden after a good deal of fore-thought. Vishwakarma first gleaned every particle (तिल) of beauty from the three worlds and collecting whatever handsome there was in mobile things, most artistically carved out an enchanting maiden and breathed life into her. He placed millions of gems and jewels on the body of this effulgent beauty.

Brahmā was mighty pleased with this creation and named her Tilottama. He said unto her : "O Tilottama, go unto the Asura brothers, Sūnda and Upasūnda and tempt them with your matchless beauty in such a way that they may cross swords with each other over possessing you." With a bewitching incline of her head she promised to accomplish the task. All the celestials and the Rishis looked on steadfastly when Tilottoma walked round the assembly before making her exit. Even the most saintly God Shiva ( one of the Trinity ) thinking one face ( with two eyes ) quite insufficient projected four

new faces in four directions, while the lewd Lord Indra created full one thousand eyes all over his body, each large and reddish, to gloat on the beauty of Tillottama. Only Brahmā, the Creator, sat perfectly tranquil and unmoved. When that great beauty went away, the celestials and the great Rishis regarded the task already accomplished.

One day Sūnda and Upasūnda went out on a pleasure trip to a table-land of the Vindhya and pitched their tent on a perfectly level and gravelly ground overgrown with tall *sala* trees in full blossom. Every object of desire of the most agreeable kind set out before them, they sat on an excellent seat in a delightful abandon with many handsome women around them. Wishing to please their masters, those damsels danced in accompaniment with music, sang many songs in praise of the mighty brothers. Thereupon Tillottama, attired in a thin red silk cloth and thereby exposing all her physical charms in their minutest details, came slowly up the hill gathering flowers in the forest.

The brothers were intoxicated with a large quantity of giddy liquor and their eyes had grown red. As soon as they saw this exquisitely beautiful damsel, they became forthwith mad with lust. Leaving their seat, they immediately ran to the place where she was standing with an inviting smile. Both being full of concupiscence, both hurried to seek her favours at the same time. Sūnda caught the fair-browed Tillottama by her right hand, while Upasūnda her left. Each of the brothers contracted his eye-brows in chagrin and then they began to upbraid each other. The elder Sūnda said, "She is my wife and your superior." Upasūnda retorted, "She is my wife and your sister-in-law." Each of them exclaimed, "She is mine, not yours." Blinded by the ravishing beauty of Tillottama, they forgot all love and friendship each bore for the other. They went for their maces, and bereft of all their reason by the all-devouring passion, they flourished their fearful clubs at each other. Then snarling "I was the first," they attacked each other. In the long run both of them fell mortally wounded on the ground.

Their bodies weltering in a pool of blood, they looked like two red-hot sun loosened down from the sky. The women and the

other attendants that were present there, all fled away trembling in grief and fear. Thereupon the pure-souled Grandsire with the celestials and great Rishis hastened to the scene of action and applauded Tilotama. He spoke in cheerfulness, "O beautiful damsel, you shall roam eternally in the region of the suns. Your splendour will be so great that none will ever be able to look at you." Having granted her this boon, the Divine Creator, retired to His holy region. Thus those two *Asuras*, united in constant friendship, killed each other for the sake of a beautiful woman.\*...

Most of the Epic characters no doubt reflect history through the mists of legends. "The complete anthropomorphisation of heavenly beings which some scholars are reluctant to admit as a possible phenomenon in the best of cases, is found in the Hindu Epic, especially in the inserted tales of the gods ; but it does not appear at all certain that epic hero represents a heavenly being in either of the Hindu Epics †". The poetic imagination of the ancient Rishis who never cared to observe historical asservations for reasons best known to them, often painted real historical personages in such exaggerated colours that they appear to us almost as legendary heroes of ethereal existence. In trying to prove the identification of Krishna with the sun-god Vishnu, they have introduced so many grotesque tales in his real life, distorting it at their sweet will, that many credulous historians have not only called in question his Herculean achievements, but wanted to doubt his very existence. This lack of historical sense and tendency of useless periphrasing went a great length in making real persons appear purely mythical and the 'airy nothing' in flesh and blood. The very life of Indra proves that the anthropomorphisation of the early Hindus went beyond any conceivable limit.

The Vedas in some, if not in many, cases, delineated natural philosophy or physics through anecdotes and fables. And the Epics and Purānas enlarged on them *ad libitum* with a view

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\* *MBh. Adś Parva*, Ch. CCX and CCXI.

† *The Cambridge History of India* —edited by E. J. Rapson. P. 257.

to giving them a ludicrously historical vestment and stamping each of them with a distant or 'local habitation and a name'. Thus it has made any rational attempt at separating myth from history next to impossible, though one can never despair of meeting with some sporadic success. We are, however, in a way, falling in with the views of the Greek Eumerides who thought that there was nothing supernatural and that the mythologies were merely attempts at a historical explanation of physical facts. The early Christians like St. Augustine rather favoured this view with a slight modification, and they thought that Zeus, Aphrodite and other Greek gods and goddesses were originally real earthly persons, not divine, but diabolical, who had become transformed by tradition into dieties\*. This view though offers much room for moderation, can essentially be taken as true and may apply well to a part of the Indian pantheon. Some modern as well as ancient writers have affirmed that all gods were men, in other words, were deified heroes †. This is probably true of many, if not of all. Herbert Spencer's proposition that the origin of the god-idea must be sought in ancestor-worship, is a reflection of the same view.

Originally Indra was created by the fantastic brain of our primitive fathers and he maintained his ethereal existence with his euphismistic attributes, his heaven and his *apsarās* only in their minds, till some influential tribal chief took into his head the idea of assuming the surname of Indra. He was probably elected the commander-in-chief of the vast Aryan army fighting the Asūras somewhere in a mountainous region of Persia or Afghanistan. Now the people were delighted to find in their midst an Indra in flesh and blood who had no doubt his panegyrists identifying him with the idealistic Indra of heaven. The primitive Aryans might have been known as *jana* or *manu* in their birth-place (somewhere in Central Asia?), though they loved to style themselves in their national ballads as *devas* (gods) which originally meant 'the bright ones'. Next the term

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\* *Sex and Sex Worship*—O. A. Wall M.D. p. 332.

† (1) *The Heroic Age*—Chadwick, pp. 265-6.

(2) *Mythological Inquiries*—Cory (q. v.)



“devas” was applied to the influential and wealthy people, specially the chiefs and mighty warriors of pure Aryan extraction\*. And the word “Indra” for some time became a favourite title with the most influential kings in the Vedic ages and even after, just as “*Vikramāditya*” became at a far later period. But by way of representing a personality evolved from a divine name, all these real Indras were knowingly or unknowingly jumbled up into one by the ancient compilers of traditions. The Indo-Aryans designated their primordial abode as *सर्ग* or heaven which then simply denoted ‘a place yielding the greatest happiness to its inhabitants,’ and with the increase of their intellectual outlook “Swarga” was dislodged from its *terra firma* and pushed high up into the sky beyond the reach of ordinary mortals †.

It is a common thing to come across the sameness of name of different persons recorded in the Vedas, the Epics and the Purānas. It is an established predication of the modern historians that there were more than one Vyasa, Vasistha, Viswāmitra, Kanwa, Kāsyapa, Janaka, Rāma, Arjuna, and many others, most of them being known by their *gotra-nāma*, family-names or patronymics. Macdonell and Keith’s *Vedic Index* has given abundant examples of the sameness of names of different persons in different periods. Ignorance of the fact that the same names of famous figures reappeared in India as in other countries has led to the strangest identifications by *Purāna*-makers and a sad predicament for the modern ethnologists. Many kings, princes and Brāhmins had the same names as gods, mythological beings and heavenly bodies. Moreover women had the same names as mythological persons, such as Apsarās; thus Vadryāswa’s queen in the North Pāṇchāla dynasty was Menakā, the queen of Trinabindū of the Vaisala dynasty was Alambushā and the Paurava Raudrāswa’s queen was Ghrītācheeṣ. The sameness and misunderstanding of names led to the fabrication of fanciful

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\* Vide an article entitled *Puraney Desh* by Prof. J. C. Roy Vidyānidhi in “Prabashi,” Vaisakh, 1338 B. S., p. 106.

† *Ibid*, p. p. 105 & 107.

§ *Ancient Indian Historical Tradition*—F. E. Pargiter M.A. p. 130.

tales. Pargiter rightly observes : "Indeed a great deal of the mythology is no doubt the work of brahmans who *lacked the historical sense* and mistook facts, and it is not euhemerism to look in that direction for the origin of silly stories and mythology connected with persons\*."

In the light of these observations it is not difficult to reduce many mythological stories to a historical basis. One can now easily presume that many trollops and courtesans plumed themselves with the names of the heavenly hetairæ to draw more customers and win greater popularity, just as many European prostitutes loved to take up on themselves the names of Acca Laurentia, Aspasia, Theodora and Messalina. Who knows that Pururavā, the worthy descendent of Vaivaswata Manu and forefather of the Kuru-Pandavas, did not marry a pure wordly courtesan or a lovely virgin with the name of Urvashi? Who can say that a most qualified Brahmin or Kshatriya chief with the title of Indra did not impregnate Kuntée with a child known afterwards as Arjuna, on behalf of Prince Pandu? May be that young Arjuna took the hospitality of this terrestrial Indra and was approached by his chief inamorata who, unfortunately for the Pandava prince, bore the name of Urvashi!

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\* *Ibid.* p. 137.

## CHAPTER V

### IMMORAL TRAFFIC LAWS IN THE SMRITIS.

The law-books of the ancient Aryans were formerly called *Dharma-Sutras*, embodying all rules and regulations pertaining to religion, society and family. Formal laws found very little space in the earliest law-books, though the necessity of adumbrating them was subsequently felt by the *Dharma-pāthakas* i. e. readers in law or legislators. All these laws were formerly versified and were woven in *trishtūp* metre and in *slokas*, for the relative administrators to keep them always fresh in memory. A few of the subsequent law-books were written in both prose and poetry, while that of *Gautama* is throughout written in prose. As time went by, the law-makers without any more expounding with nicety the rites and rituals of Hindu religion, gradually became chief exponents of social and political laws *per se* and devoted much of their energies in formulating codes of religious observances, possible archetypes of the Christian *penitentials* of the Middle Age, for people who committed any civil or criminal offences. The *Dharma-Sutras* have sometimes been called *Dharma-shāstras* and given the general term of *Smritis* or *Samhitās*.

The *Samhitās* are nineteen in number, excluding the *Samhita of Manu* or *Manava Dharma-Shāstra* which seems to be by far the oldest and most important. It is very difficult to ascertain the time of the *Manu-Samhita* or the identity of the author, Manu

was probably a compiler of all the customs and traditional laws, both political and secular, prevalent in his time ; and as the Mahabharata has mentioned him more than once as the only law-giver, it is fair to assign to him a broad date synchronous with the early parts of the great Epic age. The code has suffered like the Epics substantial changes at the hands of the subsequent editors who added much but amended very little to meet the growing demand of civilisation. But there were other law-givers who made Samhitas for themselves, and who were more or less indebted to the first law-giver Manu.

The *Vishnu-Samhita* and the *Yajnavalkya-Samhita* stand next in importance though both of them have taken many *slokas* almost verbatim from Manu. These two could not have been composed earlier than the fifth Century B. C. Then came in succession the Vasistha, Apastambha, Nārada, Parāsara, Atri, Brihaspati, Sāṅkhya and Gautama Samhitas. The rest possess little historical value and are not much worth the name. All of these were written at different times in different kingdoms of India, between third Century B. C. and fifth Century A. D.. All these law-givers though acknowledging Manu as their original source, have much outgrown the latter in method, precision, detail of legal matters and those relating to the administration of justice. Yājñavalkya of all is found to have paid particular attention to the civil and criminal procedure codes, to the enumeration of the penal offences, relative penances and punishments, the rights of succession, evidence acts and the treatment of different classes of women. From the penal codes of a country, the existence of a particular crime or crimes, can no doubt be ascertained ; but to what extent it or they were prevalent cannot be determined with exactitude unless the police diaries and the records of criminal cases in the courts of justice of the time have been preserved and are handed down to us for collation and computation. Nevertheless from the nature of punishment recorded in these ancient codes for certain crimes, one can easily presume on the extent of aversion the cream of society entertained for the crimes themselves.

Though promiscuous intercourse had been greatly circumscribed since the days of the early Epics, sexual dissipation of men found in different classes of prostitutes easy means of propitiation. The law-makers were confronted with this growing menace and tried their level best to frame Immoral Traffic Laws to cope with it. Clandestine and public prostitution during the five centuries preceding the Christian era had grown into a well-established institution and went beyond all attempts at suppression. The Brāhmin legislators and juris-consults of the kings, nevertheless, to preserve the moral integrity of the higher castes, tried their heart and soul to dissuade the delinquents from off the dangerous path and correct their pernicious habits, not through the award of heavy sentences, but by proper ethical teachings and a system of penance and auto-purification in a spiritual manner. The penance often consisted of fasting for one or several days only with water or milk diet and gift of a milch-cow to the family-priest; while the auto-purification physically manifested itself in the subject's swallowing of the holy *Panchagabya* (i.e. equal quantities of cow's milk, cow's curd, cow's clarified butter, cow's dung and urine mixed together.)

This spiritual aspect of criminal jurisprudence was lost sight of at times when such cases came up direct to the royal courts of justice. Heavy fines, mutilation of limbs (specially the sex organs), flagellation in a public place, hard penal servitude or death were the common sentences for sexual offences here. Sometimes expiation of a crime by secular methods was recommended by the local judges. The crime of adultery was punished by death in many kingdoms of Northern India for sometime after the general enforcement of conjugal fidelity. Though Manu out of respect for tradition has preserved the antique provisions of capital punishment for conjugal infidelity and recommended that the convicted woman is to be devoured by dogs in public while the man to be burned alive (*Manu-Samhita* VIII, 371), yet the practice of law seldom went up to this during the age of the *Samhitas*. The punishment was only taken recourse to when a high-caste woman had relationship with a *Shūdra* or

a pariah. If the illicit intercourse was effected between a man and a woman of the privileged classes, the law only demanded the guilty woman's hair to be trimmed and that she be treated with contempt\* and the man heavily fined. But if a man belonging to the Vaisya caste was found to have had connection with a lady of high repute, he would lose all his property, while a warrior was only fined with a thousand coins and often had his head to be shaved with urine†.

The succeeding law-makers, however, has taken a wide catholic view on all matters regarding sexual aberrations and specially in the case of the offending women. Thus they have prescribed that a woman, if ravished against her will, either by force or under false pretences, should never be cast out, as she has been helpless under the circumstances. One should wait up till her next monthly period which will wipe out all her blemishes, as the *ritūsrāb* (menstrual discharge) regularly purifies all and sundry women. Even if a wife becomes pregnant in result of an extra-marital intercourse, she should only remain unapproachable and unclean to her husband as long as she does not menstruate after her parturition; then she becomes as pure and bright as the unalloyed gold§. How many women are now-a-days turned adrift and forced to sink into the quagmire of harlotry by the apathy of their inconsiderate husbands and uncharitable guardians after they have been robbed of their so-called 'delicate purity' which is most erroneously thought as "once lost always lost!" If modern society could forego its sham orthodoxy and extend a little more consideration like the ancient law-givers to these forlorn women, who were not even protected either by their family or the society itself when they were forcibly taken away to be outraged, it could at this moment boast of a far lesser number of prostitutes in its folds!

The Brāhmins who almost monopolised the ranks of the king's prelates, cardinals, bishops and advisors in all civil matters, were

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\* *Narada-Samhita*. XII, 92.

† *Ātri* 181-191, *Parasar* Ch. X, Sl. 25.

§ *Manu-Samhita*, VIII. 384f.

as a rule injudiciously lenient to their own caste. They have made distinctly separate laws for themselves, thereby transgressing all limits of juristic decency. However repugnant this partiality appears to us now, misuse of powers more or less is everywhere manifest even at the present age. To cite an instance, certain exclusive privileges in legal and other spheres are still enjoyed by the Europeans, particularly by the conventioned Civil Service in India. The governors have always maintained a gulf between themselves and the governed, though it is not impossible to bridge it over or close it up.

The Brāhmins were most uncharitable to the Shūdras, specially to the seven classes of slaves, just as the Yankees have been towards the poor Negroes in the preceding century. Notwithstanding lynch-laws were unknown at that grade of Indian civilisation, Shūdra men and women underwent worst forms of penalties on flimsy pretexts and frivolous charges. They were precluded from all privileges enjoyed by the three upper classes. Any ordinary Brāhmin could take four wives from the four castes, (i.e., the Brāhmin, the Kshatriya, the Vaisya and the Shūdra) ; the Kshatriya from the three, the Vaishyas from the two and the Shūdra from one caste only—that of his own. No man was in fact allowed to marry in a caste higher than his own, though the lower caste women could be taken up as wives by the former. The kings frequently respected this Brāhminic rule more by infringement than by observance. Many of them possessed Brāhmin wives. The Shūdra wife of the upper classes occupied a position no better than a concubine and was solely meant for satisfying the lust of her so-called husband\*.

The law thus legalised intemperate lust of the rich among the three upper castes and opened up outlets for it within the family circle, rendering extra-marital intercourse unnecessary. The products of lust were always legitimised, though the children born of a Shūdra wife by a Brāhmin did not enjoy the same

हिजस्य भार्या यद्वा तु भवेत् कश्चित् ।

रत्यर्थमेव सा तस्य रागात्मस्य प्रकीर्तिता ॥

—*Vishnu Samhita*, Ch. XXVI, Sl. 5.

rights of succession as those having mothers of a higher caste\*. But while the Brāhmins and Kshatriya classes appropriated all rights and privileges in regard to marriage and sexual satisfaction to themselves, the lower two classes laboured under manifold disadvantages. Even there was a wide difference in the rules of penances and purgatory rites for the different castes. There was, moreover, the economic factor which sometimes rendered the maintenance of even one wife next to impossible for many people of the Shūdra caste. Then there were always amongst each caste or class a set of people who in spite of one wife or more, sought satiety beyond the legitimate limits. Some of them again were ever prepared to accept any form of the prescribed penances or in lieu of that to give any amount of fine to the local priest or village officer, if at all their sexual crimes were detected. Incest was very rare in those times ; and the regal and social laws always meted out the highest form of punishment to the culprit. Consanguineous marriages were as ever at a discount. An illicit connection with a cousin either from the mother's or the father's side, a step-sister, any girl bearing the same patronymic, a girl under one's protection, the daughter of a teacher or a preceptor, a nun, the maid of honour or a friend of the wife, was punished with condign penances†.

As most of the law-makers grew severe in maintaining chastity amongst the body politic on one hand, they practically made little efforts to penalise prostitution on the other. It was far from their mind to cause it to disappear from the civil life of the Aryan society ; they must have accepted it as a necessary and incurable evil to obviate greater ones. The Brāhmin sages did not disdain to come to the aid of the secular authorities and suggest to the latter how to restrain the evil within its proper boundaries and dissimulate it to the eyes of the decent people. They reasoned out that in trying to suppress or cicatrize this social sore, they would only compromise the security of the social life. But, on the contrary, with a relentless zeal they sought to destroy the exciting causes of prostitution and prescribed exemplary penalties for the pimps and *lenons*.

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\* *Vishnu Samhita*, Ch. XVIII.

† *Samvarta Samhita* 156, 157, 162 ; *Vishnu Samhita*, Ch. XXXVI.



The Aryan Fathers in collaboration with the kings, by clipping out all its leaves, twigs and branches, wanted to leave prostitution in a solitary wilderness as the most filthy and despised recourse for a gang of perverse folk and to render it still more abominable by drawing between it and chaste life a deep, well-defined line of demarcation.

Though self-pollution and homo-sexual practice have been deemed as venial sins of a mild nature, for which only a complete bath with the clothes on is recommended after the act\*, yet *Prājāpatya*, a rather hard form of penance has been prescribed for the sin of intercourse with a prostitute. Bestiality was a heinous crime in those days and was socially punishable by the *Prājāpatya* penance (though crime with a cow was dealt with a severer one); and most of the law-givers scornfully placed both bestiality and prostitution in the same category†.

But this was an utopian legislation which never fully attained its end. Prostitution since the time of the early Epics has been gathering forces and making inroads into every available hole and corner of society. It has been for centuries the rallying point to which most of amusement-seekers came either to repent or to rejoice. It has since become a powerful institution which left no stone unturned to make dissipation as attractive to its votaries as possible and render all attempts at its extermination impracticable. More than a dozen synonyms for the prostitute were framed and found place in the Aryan language by this time, over and above those that sprang up as a matter of course in the slum-dialects of various localities. The word *ganika* though at first denoted all classes of prostitutes in general, later on came to be applied to the courtesan class only, and sometimes it was the best among them who received this appellation§.

The *ganikas* were the cast-aways of society or at least so-called by the social potentates; and hence their food was

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\* *Vishnu Samhita*, Ch. CIII, 4.

† पशु वेश्यागमने प्राजापत्यम् । *Ibid*, 7.

Vide also *Atri*, 267, *Samvarta* 161 and *Parasara* Ch. 10, Sl. 15. *Samvarta* however has ratified the same penance for the offence of raping a virgin.

§ Vide H. C Chakladar's *Social life in Ancient India* P. 198.

unacceptable to an well-bred Aryan. In almost all the *Samhitas* all decent people are forbidden to partake of the cooked foods of a *ganikā* and a *gana*, though the latter was apparently not so detestable as the former in other respects\*. *Gana* meant a body corporate or the body-politic and in its wider sense might have signified any party or a club, specially about the towns, while the *ganikā* denoted itself as the property of the *gana*. The Vishnū Samhita ordains a seven days' fast with milk-diet only for a man or woman who takes the food of a *gana*, *ganika*, a thief and a professional musician. Āpastambha Samhita, though it does not specify prostitutes, forbids the partaking of food even from the hands of a licentious woman and prescribes a penance for the guilty.

The law-makers condemned the pimps and procurers in the most vehement terms. Vasistha lays down a strict rule that no one should seek hospitality under the roof and take foods from the hands of a man who tolerates a paramour of his wife for sordid gain or sells his daughter for immoral purposes. Jānvalkya endorses this section by adding pimps to it and all people who live on the earnings of the strumpets. Gautama predicts horrible consequences in this life and that hereafter for those who force their legally married wives into fornication and who enter into liaison with their nearest relatives, prostitutes and a bald-headed man or woman (खलुढ). Living on the earnings of the wife has been denounced by one and all, and counted amongst the *Upapatakas* or the worst sins which could partially be purged off only by the most retributive penance called *Chandrayana*.\*

From the above passages it is evident that immoral traffic was obtaining at the time, though not in such an extensive scale as in the present era. Vishnū and others have definitely mentioned that it is an unpardonable sin to act the procurer or the go-between, to entice a girl away from home and force her into

\* गणान्नं गणिकान्नञ्च विदूषा न जुगुप्सितम्—*Manu*, Bk. IV, 209. *Vide* also *Vishnu*, 517; *Sankha*, 17, 33; *Vasistha*, 14; *Gautama* 7; *Jajnavalkya* 1, 160-167.

\* *Vishnu*, 37; *Jajnavalka*, 240, etc.

the life of a prostitute and live on the earnings of her opprobrious wages. A majority of the legislators never wanted, however, to withhold the rights from the prostitutes that they were entitled to enjoy as human beings. The state protected the interest of this despicable class and gave them all humane facilities to ply their profession. The same law-makers who ordained the giving away of an iron-stick to a Brāhmin as a sign of penitence for killing a serpent, exempted the man or woman who killed an impish Don Juan, from any form of penance or punishment whatsoever\*.

It was left to Jājnavaalkya to formulate clear-cut laws in respect of concubines and prostitutes. It was perhaps for the first time that definite rules were laid down in a Samhita about the respective interests of the harlots and their customers, the transgression of these by either party being punished with varying scales of fines. *Jājñavalkya Samhita* defined that a well-guarded concubine, a maid-servant or a kept mistress (though approachable by anybody) should not be molested by a man other than her rightful master. In so doing the accused should be liable to pay a fine of fifty *panas*\*. Even if anybody forcibly outrages a woman or a maid-servant who is neither kept nor guarded by her master, it will be tantamount to a criminal offence, and the guilty should be fined ten *panas*. If forming a community of interest a set of people violate her modesty one after the other against her express disapproval, each of them will be bound to pay twenty-four *panas*†.

If a prostitute promises to entertain a man in her room and takes her proper fees in advance, but subsequently refuses intercourse, she must return the full money with as much

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\* In the original text, the word वैशिकेन occurs which means a man who has illicit connection with many women at the same time and earns notoriety as a 'lady-killer'. But Buhler has translated it most erroneously "as a woman who subsists by harlotry". Pandit P. Tarkaratna has translated it as वैशजीवी in his *Oonavimsha Samhita* (Bangavasee edition) p. 458, which, however, carries a very far-fetched meaning.

\* *Jājñavalkya Samhita*, Ch. II, 293.

† *Ibid*, 294.

from her own purse as compensation. In case she has made an oral contract but accepted no money, she will have to pay the compensation only. If, on the other hand, the visitor after settling the price and paying it in advance, becomes unwilling to have coition with her, he will not be eligible for the return of his money\*. If it transpires in evidence that a man has had an extra-vaginal intercourse (i. e. *coitus per anum, per oris, or inter femora*) with a woman, he will be sentenced to pay a fine of twenty-four *panas* †.

A very pertinent question has been raised by the law-givers of those days whether the sons or legal representatives will be held liable for any debts incurred by their deceased fathers or bequeathing relatives on wine, women, gambling, garden-parties, singing, dancing (हृषादान) etc. This question has been solved by themselves with a peremptory "no" ‡.

In case of a secret murder, the enquiring officer of the state has been advised to ask the sons and relatives of the murdered man the following questions :

- (1) Had he had any quarrels with anybody ?
- (2) Is any of his wives suspected of adultery ?
- (3) Had he had relations with any prostitutes, open or surreptitious § ?

Here we may surmise that modern French Criminologists have taken a page out of our ancient *Smritis* in as much as they try always to find out "the woman" first in all cases of non-political murders.

\* *Ibid*, 295.

† *Ibid*, 296.

‡ *Ibid*, Ch II, 48 ; *Vasistha*, Ch. XVI, etc.

§ *Yajnavalkya*, Ch. II, 283-4.

## CHAPTER VI

### PROSTITUTES IN THE PURANAS.

The Epics, the Smritis and the Pūrānas are the three noteworthy heritages of Ancient India after the Vedas. The Pūrānas may be called the "old-world legends" from the times of the Rigveda and carefully handed down from the father to the son in the form of pithy verses. Their original idea was to record the genealogies of all the principal ruling houses of North India and to perpetuate their achievements. Before the Epics, they were probably called *gāthā* (ballads) which, as we have learnt before, were composed and preserved by a class of people known as *Sūtas* who were more like bards or minstrels than faithful chroniclers. The Pūrānas themselves have narrated how the *Sūta* and *Māgadha* first came into existence at the horse-sacrifice ceremony of the legendary king Prithu, son of Vena, the *Māgadha* being the inevitable assistant of the *Sūtas* \*. The *Sūtas* and *Māgadhas* were respectively recruited from the Anupadesha (*Rarh* or West Bengal) and Magadha (modern Behar) and retained a very exalted rank in the royal courts. These *Sūtas* sprang from Khsatriya fathers and Brahmin mothers, thus forming a distinct caste for themselves who might have been the precursors of a caste like the modern Vaidyas. *Sūta* apart from his duty as a court-chronicler and

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\* *Vayu Purana*, LXII, 137-148; *Brahmanda Purana*, Bk. 2, XXXVI, 158-173; *Brahma Purana* IV, 59-67 etc.

eulogist, acted as a mayor of the royal palace and master of the horse. He is often seen as a charioteer or an emissary of the king in a battle-field. The *Suta* also recorded the life-history of the Rishis who maintained some relationship with the kings and at a later period tried feebly to concoct a theogony like the Greek Hesiod and Homer.

We have already been much acquainted with K. D. Vyasa, the classifier of the Vedas and the compiler of the Mahābhārata. He is said to have first compiled the *gāthās* or the proto-type of the Pūrānas as well, sometime before he set about to the task of writing the great Epic. He took the active assistance of Lomaharshana (Romaharshana), a *Suta* by caste, who collected from the Sutas of various kingdoms the tales, anecdotes, lores and genealogies that came down from the ages, and handed them over to his master for proper collation. Some of these materials were left out by and others underwent slight changes at the hands of the able editor who compiled the first compendious but authoritative *Purāna-Samhita*\*. Vyasa, however, has taken over good many matters from this newly made Pūrāna to insert in his subsequent work, Mahābhārata (particularly in the Adi Parva).

Lomaharshana, the erudite disciple of Vyasa, on the other hand, kept all the facts gleaned for the *Purāna-Samhita* at his finger-ends and taught them to his son Ugrasravāh Sauti † and to his six disciples as well §. Three of these latter, Kāshyapa Akritavṛana, Savarni-Somadatti and Sūsharman Shamshapāyana afterwards in their own individual ways improved upon and incorporated fresh matters into the original Pūrāna and made three separate books after their own names. And in this way deviation from the parent stock of Pauranic knowledge slowly took rise. The three Pūrānas of the three disciples of Lomaharshana are now lost to us. Lomaharshana's family, however, preserved the original *Purāna-Samhita* which for some centuries thereafter was recited by his

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\* *Brahmanda Purana* II, XXXIV, 12-16; *Vayu*, LX, 21; *Vishnu* III, IV, 16.

† *Brahmanda P.* IV, IV, 67; *Padma P.* V, 1-2-14; *MBh. Adi V*, 863-867.

§ *Brahmanda P.* II, XXXV, 63-70; *ayu P.* LXI, 55-62 etc.

descendants at different royal festivals in different kingdoms and gradually deteriorated with the appearance of other more or less spurious imitations on the field.

At least five of Lomaharshana's disciples were Brahmins who formed a separate school of the Pauranic knowledge, while his son and the Khsatriya disciple kept up the main line for some time. "It thus passed into the hands of the Brāhmans, and their appropriation and development of it increased in the course of time, as the Purāna grew into many Purānas, as Sanskrit learning became particularly the province of the Brāhmans, and as new and frankly sectarian Purānas were composed\*." Now these new sectarian Purānas are all that have come down to us, amplified or modified from time to time, to study the ancient genealogies of the kings, Rishis and gods, life-histories of the most celebrated of them, ancient ideas of cosmology, geography and ethnology. They are eighteen in number: *Brahma*, *Padma*, *Vishnū*, *Vāyu*, *Bhāgabat*, *Nāradeeya*, *Mārkaṇḍeya*, *Agni*, *Bhaviṣhya*, *Brahmavaibarta*, *Linga*, *Barāha*, *Skanda*, *Vamana*, *Koorma*, *Matsya*, *Garārha*, and *Brahmānda*. Some later Purānas (such as, *Matsya*, *Nāradeeya*, *Padma* etc.) in enumerating the eighteen Purānas, have mentioned Shaiva instead of Vāyu. The first age of the compilation of the *Adi* (Primitive) *Puranas* may be closed with the tenth century B. C. which ushers in at the same time the second Pauranic age that comes to a close sometime in the second century B. C.. After that the third Pauranic age begins to end in the fourth or fifth century A. D. †. In the second Pauranic age which almost coincides with our great Epic age, some, if not most, of the Purānas now extant came into existence. Among them Vāyu, *Brahmānda*, *Vishnū*, the first portion of *Bhaviṣhya* and *Brahma* Purānas seem to have been first compiled in succession, the first two in many places bearing strange analogy to each other. Next came the *Matsya*, *Nāradeeya*, the *Brahmavaibarta*, the *Bhāgabat*, the *Agni*, one

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\* *Ancient Indian Historical Tradition*—Pargiter, p. 24.

† *Vide* the Bengali article *Puraney Kal* by Prof. J. C. Roy Vidyanidhi published in "Prabashi" issue V, Falgun, 1337 B. S., p. 619,

by one or simultaneously in different parts of the country from the pen of different Brāhmins, probably in the second Pauranic age. In the next age, the rest of the Purānas appeared, the Garūrha, the Linga, the Padma, the Barāha and certain portions of the Bhabishya being the latest.

Though all the Pūrānas did not strictly conform to the classical definition, yet at least in one ideal scheme most of them were in complete agreement i.e. in the elaboration of the traditional genealogies of the kings from the earliest times and the theogony. Some of the later Pūrānas have, of course, left out the royal genealogy altogether, while others abridged it to give place to the deeds of a sectarian God\* and the technique of newer rituals. The Brāhmins who arrogated to themselves the monopoly of the religious ceremonies and sacramental rites, unlike the Kshatriyas or the Sutas regrettably lacked the historical sense and imported many fictitious stories of prodigious details, thus distorting the original import of a Pūrāna. The Pauranic Brāhmins gradually discarded the path of erudition and large-heartedness of the erstwhile Rishis and Mūnis, and only wanted to strengthen their position as "the first estate." In the essential duty of recording the deeds of the Kshatriya kings of yore, they never forgot to illustrate the narrow Brāhminic doctrines of their times, their super-human possibilities, their exclusive at-one-ness with the Infinite, and advocate whatever subserved their material interests†. In this way they have mixed enough new sands in the old wheat—myths with the historical events—in such a way as to make a sieving almost impracticable. Still by a more critical study, much historical data can be gleaned specially in regard to the dynastic lists. Though some of the later Pūrānas indeed became the repositories of the ritualistic informations (*Vratas* etc.), which only dealt with how a Brahmin priest could be propitiated by his parishioners, while others only enumerated the origin of different places of pilgrimage (*Teerthas*) and their superlative efficacy, two or three of the latest Pūrānas (such as, the Padma and the Linga)

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\* E. J. Rapson—*Cambridge History of India* p. 298.

† Pargiter—*Op. Cit.*, p. 59.



were probably written by Kshatriya scholars who tried to supersede Brahminic ascendancy, even derided their doctrines and went so far to say that in spite of all the Teerthas, Vratas and remunerations to the priest, loving faith (भक्ति) in the personal God is enough to bring about salvation\*.

Thus from the Pūrāṇas we are able to make a wide and general survey of, though somewhat perverted yet independent, genealogical traditions of the most ancient kings and Rishis of India since the time of the Rigveda, Atharvaveda and Brāhmanas, along with some contemporary customs and mental aspects of the upper classes of Hindus from the 10th century B. C. to the fourth century A. D. The prostitutes played an important part in the civic life of the Indians during these long fourteen centuries within our purview. But before dissertating upon that, we might go back to a more ancient period to peep into the private lives of some of the kings and Rishis who had come in contact with the women of easy virtue, without, of course, questioning the credibility of the authorities quoting them.

The earliest part of the royal genealogies like the most chronicles of other nations is shrouded in misty legends. The *Sutas* presumed that all ruling dynasties of the Aryan blood in India were descendants of the Sun and the Moon up to which they have traced the genealogical line. The first ruler of man (i.e. the Aryans) was the son of the Sun, *Manu Vaivasvata* who flourished at least 2400 or 2500 years before the Mahābhārata War, and it was he who gave rise to all the royal houses of Northern India. His eldest son's name was Ila who was mysteriously transformed into a lady under the following circumstances. In a forest named *Sharavana*, God Shiva was spending pleasant days in the soothing embraces of His Holy Spouse, Umā. Wishing to remain uninterrupted, one day Shiva threw a spell all over the forest so that any intruder there would forthwith be turned into the opposite sex. After an adventurous tour all round the country, Prince Ila was on that very day returning to his capital on horse-back. When passing by this enchanted

Sharavana, his mettled horse suddenly bolted and trotted pell-mell into the forest with the prince on its back. The spell had its instantaneous effect on both the victims, one of them turning into a beautiful maiden and the other into a handsome mare.

The bewildered prince atonce perceived a thorough transformation within and all over his body. His breasts swelled and became hard and tapering like those of a full-grown virgin, and his thighs and hips got highly developed. His eyes became like two leaves of the lily; face like the full moon; looks laden with an amorous effulgence; complexion bright faint brown; gait like that of a swan or a she-elephant, hair deep blue with delightful natural frizette on the forehead and so forth. Ilā thenceforth became Ilā, and thus transformed, began to roam aimlessly in the forest. At this time Prince Būdha, came upon her and asked her to accompany him to his royal abode. Here Ilā consorted with Būdha and became pregnant, bringing forth in course of time a son named Pūrāvā Ailā\*. Afterwards Shiva being propitiated, and through His favour Ilā became a *Kimpūrūsha* (alternate sex) and was christened with a new name, Sūdyumna. Thenceforward he became a man in one month and a woman in the next.

Prince Būdha was a son of the god *Soma* or Moon, so called because the intoxicating *Soma* plant is said to have originated in the region of the Moon. The Moon-god, inspite of his twenty-seven wives, once abducted *Tārā*, wife of Brihaspati, the spiritual preceptor of the gods, and began to have carnal knowledge of her for days together. He could not be persuaded to give back the lady to her husband who felt so insulted at this demeanour of the profligate Soma that he marshalled the whole heavenly forces against the seducer. A sanguineous theomachy was waged by the stubborn Soma, who, however, at the intervention of Brahmā, atlast reluctantly restored Tārā to the possession of her husband. But Tārā bore a child in result of this illicit relation. Brahmā

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\* *Matsya Purana*, Ch. XI, 40-66, Ch. XII, 1-16; *Padma P.* Bk. V., Ch. VIII, 75-124; *Brahmanda P.*, Ch. VII, 1-23 etc.

Some versions have omitted the incident of sex-transformation and recorded that Manu's eldest issue was a daughter named Ilā. Vide also *Shatapatha Brahmana* I, 8. 1.

christened that natural child as Būdhā†. Perhaps this myth bears an astronomical allusion in its bosom.

Būdhā and Ilā's son, Pūrūravā, was installed by his grandfather in Pratisthanapura (modern Allahabad) as a king who became the fore-father of the Kauravas and the Pandavas. This Pūrūravā was enamoured of the divine (?) Urvashi and spent many happy years in the generous embraces of this comely courtesan. We have already said that Urvashi in her nascent stage was in the keeping of the two divine brothers, Mitra and Varuna. When Pūrūravā was sojourning in heaven as a guest of his friend Indra, Urvashi won the heart of the earthly king by the splendour of her ravishing beauty and also by the art of her courrant dancing. Mitra and Varuna detected that she was fast inclining towards Pūrūravā, and cursed her with a descent to the earth to expiate her love for a mortal. Urvashi readily accepted this curse, and coming down, sought to give herself up to the warm embraces of Ilā's worthy son.

A new offshoot has been grafted into this story probably by some clever scribe or an officious editor of the Matsya Pūrāṇ (Ch. XXIV, Sl., 23-32) which goes to say that while Urvashi was being forcibly carried away by Keshee, a *dānava* king, Pūrūravā attracted by her cries came to her rescue and warded off the abductor. He escorted Urvashi safely to heaven and thus earned the loving gratitude of the celebrated nymph. This was an occasion which went a great way to cement the hearts of Pūrūravā and Indra in a lasting friendship. The latter in felicitation arranged a dramatic performance in which Menakā, Urvashi and Rambhā were made to show their best in music and dancing under the guidance of their learned opera-master, Bharata. Urvashi had taken up the title-role (the subject being "Lakshmi's self-choice of a husband"), but being nonplussed in front of the appreciative gaze of the Raja, she stopped short in the midst of her part. This was enough to

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† *Brahma P.*, Ch. IX, 18-32; *Bishnu P.*, part IV, 7-19; *Matsya P.*, Ch. XXIII, 29-89, XXIV 1-7; etc.

disconcert her opera-master who in a fit of blind fury imprecated her to remain a creeper for two hundred and fifty years on earth until the touch of the love-lorn Pūruravā would exonerate her. Bharata, the ancient authority on dramatic technique and histrionic art was a historical figure who probably thrived between 3rd and 2nd centuries B. C.. So this piece of narrative was interpolated sometime after that period.

Then the Visṇu Pūrāṇa continues to relate that the fastidious Urvashi became highly flattered by the courtship of Pūruravā who importunately addressed her, "O lady with faultless eye-brows, I am greatly taken up with thee. Be propitious to me and favour me with thy love," and she blushingly acceded to his proposal. But she wrested a promise from the love-sick Raja that he would never drive away the two pet lambs of hers from her bed-side at night, that he would never show himself stark naked before her eyes and that he would allow her to subsist only on clarified butter. A breach of any of these terms would be enough to wean her away from his side. Thereafter the Raja plunged headlong into the rippling river of the nymph's unsophisticated beauty and had a jolly time of it. Urvashi never repented to have come away from amidst all the admirable amenities of paradise and she amply repaid the love the king bestowed on her.

But, on the other hand, heaven had lost much of its charm in the absence of Urvashi and missed her much. So one day at the dead of night, Viswāvasu, in conspiracy with some of the divine singers, stealthily entered the palace of Pūruravā and lifted one of the pet lambs of Urvashi from beside her bed. The pitiable bleating of the lamb awoke Urvashi who cried out, "Alas! Helpless I am! Who is taking away my lamb—as dear as a child? Whom shall I call out for help?" But the Raja who had been keeping his bed in the same room and roused from his slumber by the wailings of Urvashi, did not wish to rush to the rescue of the lamb, as he was virtually without his night-gown. Under cover of darkness, the Gandharvas purloined the second lamb which piteously bleated like the first. Urvashi again lamented :

"Ah dear me ! Methinks, I am without any protector or a loving master ; I am rather patronised by a bungling coward who cannot save my child." The king, highly mortified at this, atonce threw off the bed-cover, and sword in hand, made for the door, thinking that Urvashi could not possibly observe his nudity in the dark. But the omniscient Gandharvas at that dramatic moment flashed off an electric light, which revealed the Raja in his natal robe, full and vivid, before the eyes of his inamorata. The Gandharvas left behind the two lambs near the door ; but Urvashi went over unperceived to the Gandharvas and accompanied by them returned to heaven, as the Raja had violated his promise.

Pūrāvā came back to the bed with the two lambs to find a deserted bed. Then the disconsolate Raja shirking all his royal duties began to rove aimlessly in all places. At last near Kūrūkshetra he found Urvashi with four other Apsarās on the banks of Ambhoja lake. The Raja, almost deranged, atonce came rushing there and addressed her thus : "O my love, how cruel are you ! Do come in the midst of my forlorn heart, and deign to give me the favour I long to ask of you." At this, Urvashi replied, "Well Raja, do not be any more indiscreet. I am now in the family way. Please come here after a year, when you shall find your baby. I shall at that time allow you a night to spend with me." Pūrāvā, somewhat consoled, turned his steps towards his capital. Pointing to the departing Raja, Urvashi said to her companions, "Look, there goes the king Pūrāvā with whom I have spent so many years in love and amity ! " The Apsarās congratulated her saying, "You are rather fortunate, dearie ! We wish he had fallen in love with and gone in unto all of us !" After one year had rolled by, the Raja came to the spot to find Urvashi true to her words. She presented him with a male-child name Ayu, and in consequence of her having had to spend a night with her old cavalier, became again big with no less than five children\* !

Thus the Pūrāna-makers too, one and all, have freely fabricated many astounding tales of the heavenly nymphs—their relations with the mortals and their coming on deputation to the earth

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\* *Vishnu P.*, Part IV. Ch. 21-36.

either to break the chastity of the sages (mostly the king's spiritual preceptors and primates) or to despoil the integrity of a mighty king. These explanatory mythical tales could hardly have sprung from pure imagination and must have developed from the seed of some flagrant reality. It was probably a common principle of politics to employ charming young courtezans to ensnare an aggrandising king and to weaken his position and degrade his morale. These courtezans who were aught but heavenly hailed from the mid-Himalayan (chiefly from its western side) and trans-Himalayan regions, and mostly belonged to the Gandharva race †.

Like the Māgadhas, these Gandharva girls were from their very childhood trained to the art of singing and dancing like the Naik girls of Kumayun or the Kānchanis § of the late Moghul Court. These fair-complexioned hill-tribes had a religion of their own, probably bordering upon crude animism and ancestor-worship, which in some respects nicely tallied with the Aryan religion. But the moral character of the Gandharvas was far from being austere and irreproachable, and it was amongst them that matriarchal polyandry still persisted. A band of the Gandharavas migrated to the southern side of the Himalayas sometimes after the Indo-Aryans had settled in the Punjab and a portion of the Gangetic delta. A few might have pushed their settlement further South-east and were absorbed into the growing Aryan civilisation. From the Brāhmanic period, however, some of the free-willed Gandharva women used to come down from their mountainous abode to the principal cities of Northern India to seek amatory

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† Vide Pargiter's *Ancient Indian Historical Traditions*, p. 297. The learned monographist postulates a theory on the strength of different Pauranic versions that both Pururavā and Urvashi belonged to the Gandharva race; the river Mandākinī, Alakā, the Chaitraratha and Nandana forests, the Gandhamādāna mountain all belonged to the Gandharva region, the so-called Ilavritabarsha, the integral part of the primitive abode of the Aryans, in other words, sometime their material *Swarga*.

§ *Storia Do Mogor*—Dr. Niccolao Manucci (William Irvine's Translation) Vol. I, p. 196; *Tavernier's Travels* etc.

adventures often coupled with the prospect of an abundant lucre, their principal objects of prey having been the kings, their ministers or courtiers. With an inheritance of wonderful intelligence and power of accomodation as well as a glowing natural beauty and high musical attainments, they could bring down any austere man from his perch. They always lived luxuriously and spent lavishly, though rarely showed themselves in any public functions like the Roman meretrices or the Greek hetairæ.

These Gandharva girls for professional reasons loved to style themselves as Urvashi, Menakā, Gritāchee, Misrakeshee etc. ; they seldom lived permanently in a city or in a king's harem as his concubines, sojourned for a few months to a few years in each flourishing city and generally returned to their native places before the approach of senility. As the common run of the people, far less of having had the privilege of enjoying their company, could hardly catch a glimpse of these dazzling highland beauties of nomadic nature patronised only by the aristocracy, and as they saw very few of them either losing their persistent charms or dying a natural death in their midst, they quite pertinently led themselves into the belief that these courtesans must be hailing from the never-decaying heaven. The Pūrāna-makers only took advantage of this plebeian credence to make a good foundation for their romantic stories. In the Buddhistic age we behold some of the Gandharva women who had somehow overcome the infatuation for divine designations, settle in the land of the Lichchhavis and in the kingdoms of Videha, Srāvastī and Koshalā. Most of them became famous *ganikas* of the time, some coming in close contact with the Lord Buddha and his Apostles, as we shall find in another chapter.

That all the ascetics were not liable to the temptation of the flesh by those "divine" hetairæ, has been amply illustrated not only in the Epics but also in the Pūrānas. There were many archaic prototypes of St. Paul, who like him preached life-long celibacy and selfless devotion as the only key to the kingdom of Heaven. They practised what they preached and anathematised any form of sexual connection. The kings that wallowed in

luxury and sensuality ( so many material prototypes of the divine Indra ) often looked on with disparaging eyes these fanatic vows of chastity and sometimes were curious enough to test the enduring virtue of these reverend anchorites.

One day Nārada, the Brāhmin minstrel and messenger of the heavenly regions, adventitiously paid a visit to Indra's private chamber and saw him surrounded by his precious Apsarās merrily whiling away the time. After according him due reception, Indra spoke to him, "Well Sage ! Here attend Rambha, Misrakeshee, Tilottamā, Urvashi, Ghritāchee, Menakā and others. Kindly command whoever of them will entertain you by her dancing." Nārada, the divine Brāhmin, mused within himself for a few moments and said unto the Apsarās, ' Now ! Whosoever amongst you believe herself excelling the rest in beauty, magnanimity and other attributes, may dance before me. In order to be successful in the art of music and dancing, one must be endowed with a natural grace and the necessary qualities. That which is accompanied with different appealing tableaux, poses, postures, movements of the limbs, the eyes and the eye-brows, can be called dance in the proper sense of the term."

Upon this, every one of the Apsaras began to mumble, "I am the best of the lot !" These pretensions soon grew into a wrangle and the courtesans began most vehemently to decry one another. At last at Lord Indra's suggestion, Nārada was selected an arbiter who pacifying all the squabble said unto them : "Look here ! One who among you will be able to decoy Dūrvāshā Mūni sitting tense in holy meditation on the mountains will prove herself the fittest of all." All the Apsarās sank down their heads in dismay, muttering, "It is not our affair. We won't be able." But the Apsarā Bapu who could boast of having cracked many hard nuts before, came forward with a stiff neck and volunteered to carry it through.

Thereafter Bapu came within two miles of the place where Dūrvāshā was residing, and began to sing with a marvellous crescendo as sweetly as the cuckoo. Snatches of the divine melody came floating through the air to the ragged hut of the rigorous Rishi. Being inquisitive as to who might be so foolishly



spending such sonorous notes in that solitary region and for what earthly reasons, he followed their trail. Dūrvāshā soon found out the faultlessly charming siren, beholding whom he serenely contained himself and atonce understood the motive of the song. The Mūni cursed her to the effect that she would before long be metamorphosed into a bird and in that state remain for sixteen long winters....

As we have said before, the rudimentary but well-arranged facts about the Paurānic kings having passed into the hands of the Brahmins underwent substantial changes and were mercilessly mutilated or distorted in some places. They committed often with a motive worst anomalies not only in respect of names but also of times, this anachronism invariably leading one into the pitfalls of the gravest errors. The holy cities and places of pilgrimage, tremendous sanctity of certain rivers, images of the Trinity, the allurements of the pseudo-religious rites called *Vratas* (to be performed always with the assistance of the Brāhmin priests), were creations of a hierarchical age that dawned upon long after the times of the Vedas or Vyasa and Lomaharshana, though strangely for us, these have been freely foisted in the *Māhābhārata* and all the *Pūrānas* excepting a few of the earliest period. The Brāhmins have mostly drawn old faded portraits in a new back-ground and *vice-versa*, thus evincing a hopeless inefficiency of their brush and a lack of enough mother-wit in their brains.

Still there are much ancient traditional matters since the time of the early Vedas left almost untouched by the Pauranic Brahmins who have been the custodians of them for more than two thousand years and who were at first quite unconscious that much of them often belied the Brahminical pretensions that gradually developed thereafter. We have already known enough of the customs and manners bearing on our subject during the Vedic and Epic ages. The *Pūrānas* may furnish a finishing touch to this first-hand knowledge and supply us with enough trustworthy materials for the age during which they were composed—to wit, from the 10th century B. C. to the 5th after Christ. If they can be corroborated by other contemporary evidences or supplemented with

the writings of Kautilya, Vātsāyana, the Buddhist apostles, some of the Greek ambassadors and travellers, they will construct for us a most complete and composite structure of knowledge about prostitution from the fifth century B. C. to the fifth century A. D.

Not only there are rich descriptions of the so-called heavenly hetairæ and their amorous adventures in most of the Pūrānas, but they abound in flippant narrations of the beauty and characteristics of the women of different places of this vast country. Thus in the *Brahma-Pūrāna* alone, we find at least seven places where the writer has taken pleasure in depicting the famous beauties of various cities and holy places. To quote an instance we might refer our readers to the Chapter LXI, where the author, brings to light a holy place called Ekāmrakshetra. Here is laid out an emporium of ten millions of phallic emblems of Shiva. Here one is to find many women remarkable for their fine waists moving along liesurely with a jovial heart. The necks of these women are heavily adorned with strings of gold ; their eyes are as wide as the lotus-leaves ; they are possessed of hard and dignified breasts, nascent youth, face as round as the full moon with plump cheeks and luxurious hair. Each of them is endowed with a pair of embonpoint thighs, with all the amiable signs on her figure and dressed in rich rainbow-coloured clothes. Some of them are blonde, others possessing a skin of golden hue ; some are pacing like the swan-geese, others little inclining for their heavy protruding bosom. They are all soaked in rare scents and always in a merry mood and after delightful sports. Their whole figure is characterised by a wonderful grace toned up with apparent intellectuality.

There are in the holy place also good many men of bright complexion who can well boast of their elegant youth. Over and above, the place is inhabited by many courtesans like Ghritāchee, Pramlochā and Menakā. They are all good conversationists, ever jolly, adept in the art of entertainment, good-looking and well-dressed. None of them is ugly-looking, discourteous or displeasing. Any soul can be brought to be inflamed with a desire by glancing at any of these women.

In the latter half of the Pauranic age, and close on the heels of the Greek influence in India, diverse gods with their wooden, metal or stone images were brought into being and temples were erected all over the country to shelter these images. The priests, the stone-cutters, the brick-layers, the sculptors, the carpenters and the masons thus found themselves busy from one end of the year to the other round these temples which held out to them and their succeeding generations a most promising future. Devoted peoples from all parts of the country flocked there in season and out of season, particularly on the "holy days", and the prostitutes urged by their professional prospects followed their trail to create a honeycomb of voluptuousness round this newer pantheon of the Aryans. Many of the pilgrims who came there to ease their tortured souls, found near at hand easy means to appease their bestial bodies. The priests of the temples could not stop the incursions of the prostitutes who gradually settled in large numbers about them. Even some of the worthy custodians of the divine images could little restrain themselves from being regular customers of these handsome dealers in sensual pleasures. Their visible leniency or unremitting non-chalance thus gave the harlots enough latitude to practise their business freely in and outside the temple-compound.

Gradually a compromise, as it were, was effected between religion and prostitution, the latter being in some sort sanctified thereby. All ritualistic religions in their perceptions could not in any way relinquish the sexual impulse of man and woman. The primitive man assumed the activity of spirits in explanation of the sexual impulse and everything associated therewith, and he paid divine veneration to this insuperable impulse as the most material manifestation of those spirits. Civilisation could very little suppress it, although it has tried to, and at last has succeeded in having it invested with a sublime crown of metaphysical interpretation. To what extent the metaphysical has influenced and pervaded the sexual life of man, has most critically been analysed by Schopenhauer in his '*Metaphysic of Sexual Love*.' "The identity of religions and sexual perceptions explain the frequent transformation of one into the other, and the continuous associa-

tion between the two. A sexual emotion will often function vicariously for a religious emotion, in part or wholly. The unusually interesting history of the complicated and remarkable sexual phenomena renders clear to us individual processes of this kind and certain peculiarities of racial psychology ; and thereby we are led to understand the powerful after-effects of these phenomena in the customs, the morals and the conventions of our time, and we are enlightened as to the role still played by the religio-sexual factor in the life of many men even of our own day.”\*

It was in this way that legal prostitution thrust out an off-shoot towards the boundary-wall of the temples to revive religious prostitution with a baser ideal and a newer zeal after a torpor of several centuries. When this religio-legal prostitution became such a menacing scandal as to compromise the integrity of chaste ladies that visited the temples and unbearingly noisome to the really sincere devotees, prostitutes about the holy places were in course of time probably debarred from entering the temple-compound except at a certain fixed hour of the day, leaving out a chosen few who wielded a great influence with the presiding priests. The latter most likely either enjoyed the patronage of the priests or contributed a large portion of the fruits of their nocturnal labours to the temple-funds ; hence they were consecrated like the *Kedescoths* and came to be known as the inevitable hand-maids of the ruling dieties. They entertained the pilgrims and the priests as well as the stone-gods themselves (supposed to be capable of all the sense-perceptions in a high degree) by their exquisite display of dancing and music at the time of formal worship.

This system, we have reasons to presume, ruled in almost all the temples of the Northern India sometime during the Pauranic period to be suppressed in time to a great extent ; while in Southern India, it was refined and emended with the progress of time to yeild place to the usage of “*Devadashee*” on which we shall have to expatiate hereafter. In Northern India, however,

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\* *The Sexual Life of Our Time*—Iwan Bloch, M. D., p. 100.

the growing demands for morality about the holy places could never expatriate the inmates of the flash-house. Still there are many a holy place in India which with a bashful candour may admit to have been harbouring a good number of harlots among its population. Benares, one of the oldest and most prosperous seat of pilgrimage, may be cited as a glowing instance.

The writer of *Brahma-Pūrāṇa* in another place, by way of describing the City of Avantee, capital of King Indradyūma, has taken up considerable space in dwelling upon the physical charms of its inhabitants. The prostitutes of Avantee were accomplished in singing, dancing and musical instruments, most alluring in appearance and decorous in address. King Indradyūma once visited *Purushottama-khsetra* which he selected as the site for the erection of a temple of God Viṣṇu (Jagannātha). The King was simply enchanted with the ravishing beauty of the women here, who were all proud of their superb youth, attractive bodies and tremendous hips. These Oriyā women were as adept in the art of music as in the finesse of sexual pleasures.

The Raja had arranged a stupendous sacrificial ceremony on the eve of the installation of the Viṣṇu-image. The ceremony can only compare to the Rājasūya-Jajna of King Yūdhishthira. Indradyūma who boasted of possessing full thirteen hundred wives—all with compact and tapering breasts and eyes like the leaves of the water-lily, was charitably disposed to his millions of guests hailing from all the cardinal points of the country. He not only distributed billions of gold coins, thousands of horses, elephants, bulls and milch-kine, but made a gift of full five hundred maidens to as many choice Brāhmins. These girls were dressed *cap-a-pie* with silken garments and costly ornaments, their close and round bosom tucked up in mulmul corsets, the middle portion of their bodies slim and graceful, necks highly flexible and limbs remarkably proportionate and decorated with many tinkling bracelets and anklets\*.

\* *Op. cit.*, Ch. XVII. Sl. 68-70 ; 81-89.

Some of the Pūrānas in order to best subserve the sectarian interest, and to adduce sufficient proofs of Krishna's eligibility for being raised to the status of an universal god, enlarged on his life-history *ad-arbitrium* in the act of which they frequently brought their power of poetic fantasy into full play. Here again we have to face the same difficulty of histro-mythical intermixture as elsewhere. Consensus of the antiquarians has, of course, swallowed all these with a grain of salt. But at least in one point authenticity has not been called in question, and it was that Krishna was a veritable sexual athlete like all the greatest personages of the old world. Like Solomon the Wise or the Kings of Siam, he could boast of possessing several hundred wives and concubines which at the hands of the sadly discontented but madly devoted chroniclers might have risen to several thousands years after he lived. From Vishnū, Devi Bhāgabata and other Pūrānas, it transpires that Krishna was already a passionate lover at an age when our boys of to-day have hardly forgotten their bibs and pinafores. His sound intrigues, his cunning devices, his seductive flute, his all-evasive trysts, his rampant love-adventures and hypnotic influence with all the maids and respectable ladies of the neighbourhood of Gokūl and Vraja, are too well-known to our readers to admit of further enumeration here.

Krishna and his elder step-brother, Balaram, were indeed precocious in all respects and shewed wonderful versatility from their early teens. Kamsa, the tyrant of Mathūra, their maternal uncle, was no less a patroniser of women than his other contemporaries. He had in his royal household many choice beauties of the time posted in various offices—from that of a concubine to that of a chalice-bearer. He had in his employ a very handsome young maiden named Anekavakrā who had to prepare daily different fragrant pastes and unguatum for that capricious King. Anekavakrā had one prominent physical defect which marred to a great extent her youthful enchantment. She was somewhat hunch-backed and that is why she was nick-named *Kūñjā*.

One day the two brothers came up with Anekavakrā on the main road of Mathura when she was bearing sandal-paste and

other unguents for her master, and asked the lovely maiden to spend all her scented pastes on their youthful bodies. Kuvjā was highly flattered at this and she was only too glad to besmear the two brothers with the whole of unguents meant for the mighty ruler, Kamsa. Young Krishna, being extremely gratified at this intrepid devotion, with the assistance of Balarām and by means of some simple manipulations, at once made Anekavakrā's vertebral column as straight and natural as others. Kuvjā now became matchless in beauty. In grateful transports, she caught hold of Krishna's garments and besought him with a love-laden heart to come to her house to accept her hospitality. Krishna promised to visit her on some other occasion and was true to his word. Kuvjā thereafter for a few years commanded Krishna's highest admiration and deepest love\*.

Young Krishna's *Rāsa-Leelā* or "divine orgy" with the milk-maids of the neighbourhood of Vraja has been delineated in glaring terms and specious language by many of the *Pūrāna-Kartās*. Even a stolid reader could understand that the orgy was far from being of a spiritual nature. It has most perspicuously been described in the *Pūrānas* how the married and unmarried girls having fallen desperately in love with this indefatigable pastoral lover paid midnight visits to him on the banks of the Jamūnā and how in the midst of ponderous jests and succulent serenades, they offered their everything for the satisfaction of Krishna, who was equally hospitable to everyone of them†. A moment's absence of Krishna seemed to the milk-maids that of a full year; all throughout the day they counted Krishna's name over and over again on their mental rosary. In spite of their being dissuaded from meeting that inveterate gallant any more by their fathers, husbands and brothers, these love-distraught ranch-women stole

\* *Vishnu Purana*, Pt. V. Chap. XX, 1-2; etc.

† ताभिः प्रसन्नचित्ताभर्गोपीभिः सद्यः सादरम् ।

ररास रासगोटीभिरुदारचरितो हरिः ॥

away every night from their homes to have sexual congress with the swarthy bucolic hero of Vraja\*.

When the redoubtable Kamsa arranged a boxing and wrestling contest between two of his noted wrestlers—Chānūr and Mūsthik and his two young nephews—Krishna and Balarām, well-decorated platforms, galleries and dais were erected round the arena for thousands of prospective spectators. Separate platforms were raised for the ladies of the king's harem, the women about the town and others §. During the contest, how Krishna became the cynosure of all eyes—the females in particular, how the ladies of Kamsa's harem and other women of the city in the heart of their hearts sided with his enchanting boy-hero and sincerely wished him to come off with flying colours, the Pūrānas have not omitted to delineate in delightfully dashing lines.

Then in course of time how Krishna put the satanic Kamsa and his vast army to rout in an open fight, killed him mercilessly and installed Ugrasena, the rightful owner, to the throne of Mathūra and the occasion which made the Yādavas migrate to the Western Coast near modern Gujrat and found a new kingdom at Dwāraka or Dwārāvati, Krishna's successful war with Narakāsūra, king of Prāgyotishpūr and his arrogation of the defeated Dānāva's rich harem packed up with sixteen thousand women of the rarest beauty, have fragmentarily been noticed before. The Pūrāna-makers could not rest content unless they had had by the great killer of Kamsa married the

\*ता वाय्य माणा पितृभिः पतिभिःर्षादभिस्तथा ।

कृष्णं गोपाङ्गना राक्षी रमयन्ति रतिप्रिया ॥

— *Ibid.* Also *Devi Bhagabat*, *Hari Vamsa* etc.

§ *Vishnu Purana* Pt. V, Sl. 26.

The *Padma Purana* (Ut. Kh., Ch. CCMXV, Sl. 64-65) before proceeding to relate the sweeping love-revelries of Krishna sets up a piece of monstrous story that the great Rishis of Dandaka forest several centuries ago being charmed with the youthful lustre of Rāma longed to enjoy his body ( a homosexual desire ) which in their latest birth has changed their sex and made them so many *Gopees* of Vraja to have their ancient desire fulfilled by Krishna, a supposed fac-simile of Rāma.



whole gynecium of Narakāsūra in a day and at the same hour to legalise that appropriation. If there was a marriage at all, that was no doubt the grandest and most unprecedented one in the social history of the world of all ages,—one bridegroom *cum* sixteen thousand brides ! Really it was a sight for the gods to see !

Over and above these, Krishna had eight 'legitimate' wives ; he neglected none of them and regularly consummated the marriage with all and sundry as a thorough-bred, ideally dutiful husband\*. After the demise of the Lord Krishna, all throughout his life a pet lamb among the ladies and a great lance among the lions, Arjūna hastened to Dwārakā and had the funeral obsequies of his greatest friend and supporter observed in a regal grandeur. Then he made a selection of one thousand of Krishna's widows and with them set out for his native land. But on the way they were overtaken by a band of Ābheera robbers who probably inhabited the south-western part of Rajpūtānā. Arjūna, erstwhile the greatest marshall of the Mahābhārata War, could not withhold the attacks of the robbers ; he was over-powered in spite of his being valiantly assisted by some of the Yādava followers, and the thousand widows of late lamented Sree Krishna were laid hold of by the undeterred plunderers. Some of the ladies followed the Ābheeras of their own accord and others were forcibly carried away by them. Arjūna's all military talent was of no avail for the first time in his life, and this unforeseen mishap so moved him that he wept like a helpless child †.

Krishna had begotten on his sixteen thousand and eight wives children reaching up to the fabulous number of one hundred and eighty thousand,—an achievement worthy of a divinity ! Pradyūmna was the eldest and most prominent of Krishna's children ; Shāmba perhaps can be mentioned next. Pradyūmna was kidnapped by a demon called Shambarāsūra on the sixth day of his birth and was thrown into the sea. The baby was swallowed intact by a

\* *Brahma Purana*, Ch. CCIV, Sl. 16.

† *Vishnu Purana*, Pt. V., Ch. MVIII, Sl. 21-39.

big fish which along with a few smaller ones was soon after hauled up in a net by the fishermen and was presented to Shambarāsūra for his table. Māyāvati was a woman who acted as a concubine and chef in the demon's household. By ripping open the belly of the fish, Māyāvati found Padyūmna still alive and she took up in mute ecstasy the bonny baby who shone forth like the "first germinating seed of the scorched tree of lust ‡."

Pradyūmna was thereafter nurtured with scrupulous care by Māyāvati who had taken a great fancy to this promising offspring of the mighty Yādava. When he reached his adolescence, Māyāvati who still retained the lustre of her youth in all its luxuriance, began to manifest her long-cherished love for her ward in various ways. The lad was astonished to find that this woman in whose lap he had been nursed since his infancy should eschew all her maternal instinct and be smitten with an animal passion almost verging upon insanity. Māyāvati atlast divulged all the secrets of his birth and the atrocity of his implacable paramour, upon which Pradyūmna, a worthy son of a worthy father, killed Shambarāsūra with his whole soldiery, and came back elated and victorious to his strange lady-love. His heart was now kindled like the brush-wood with the first impulse of love. He could neither forsake nor forget Māyāvati who was her life-giver and who had for the first time breathed music into his young soul and whose gentle touch had for the first time sent through his veins the thrills of a dangling desire. He married her outright, and accompanied by the bride, returned to Dwāraka—almost a stranger like the Count of Monte Christo.

One day in the midst of vernal season with the sweet warbling notes of the cuckoo, the demulcent southern breeze and the laughing water-lilies in full bloom, when the sixteen thousand "inferior" (सामान्या) wives of Sree Krishna were sitting on the side of an artificial lake in the inner court of the Yādava harem and making mirth in drinking and jesting, Shāmba, Krishna's son by Jāmbavatee, was

‡ दारिणि मत्स्यजउरे मा ददर्शाति शोभनम् ।

कुमारं मन्मथतरोर्दग्धस्य प्रथमाङ्कुरम् ॥

passing by that way. Stalwart, uncommonly handsome with a kind of lofty ease in his air and movements and decorated with various sparkling ornaments, he looked like an Amor incarnate. Krishna's wives, all tipsy, were flared up with a hankering to seek the company of this charming step-son of theirs, and their eyes followed him gloatingly as he strode on. Krishna came to know of this and imprecated them that they would be kidnapped by highway robbers soon after his death, and be their life-long slaves. His wives having now come to their senses and to understand the gravity of the imprecation, implored their omnipotent master to revoke his dire curse upon them ; at this Krishna told them that a curse once uttered could not be abrogated, but as they were repentent of their misdemeanour they would be advised by Rishi Dāldya how they could be redeemed from their serfdom by the performance of a *Vrata*.

*Barāha Pūrāna*, however, has conceived the idea that the sixteen thousand wives of Sree Krishna had long been in secret liaison with Shāmba. Nārada somehow having come to know of this calumny that destroyed the sanctity of the harem of a personage like Krishna, came rushing to Dwaraka to apprise the latter of the fact and to seek punishment for the culprits. At Nārada's suggestion the inmates of the harem and Prince Shāmba were brought into his presence and he got salient proof of his wives' infidelity when he observed that all of them began to cast lascivious looks on their step-son before his very eyes. The women were dismissed, and Shāmba remained standing with folded palms and trembling limbs. Turning towards Nārada, the Yādava chief remarked "O divine Rishi, strange are the character and ways of women ! They are always steeped in sinful thoughts or acts. Absence of a proper place, lack of suitable opportunity and inability to take the initiative—these only go to make a woman chaste. Be a woman blonde or brunette, ugly, exquisitively beautiful or mediocre, a flippant maid or an aged housewife, her sexual regions salivate at the sight of a handsome youth. Shāmba seems to be innocent as I know him to be a self-collected, spirited, righteous and well-mannered lad. He might have been momentarily moved by the elcquent beauty of those young ladies." But Nārada reasoned

him down by saying that only one wheel can hardly set a chariot in motion. The aggressive and suggestive looks of a man are responsible for secreting the secret parts of a woman by which she may derive a sort of self-satisfaction. Shāmba was equally guilty, if not more. The heavenly messenger insisted on Shāmba being punished by his royal father, upon which Krishna forsook his offending child and caused the worst form of leprosy to invade his body\*.

None could annul Krishna's imprecation. We have already seen that the wives (but only one thousand of them†) of the celebrated Yādava chieftain became the captives of the Ābheera marauders and afterwards reduced to prostitutes. When they were thus leading a miserable existence in the worst squalor conceivable, Dāldya Rishi visited them as had been ordained by Krishna. He was accorded a most reverent reception by the former widows of the great Yādava, after which with tearful eyes and remorseful heart they asked him, "O Reverend Lord, the robbers have outraged our modesty ; so we have lost our chastity against our will. O Sire ! Be thou our support and advisor. Lord Keshava decreed that you alone could point out to us the way to our redemption. Therefore be now gracious enough to enlighten us why we have been so down on our luck after enjoying the company of Lord Krishna—a divine incarnation, as his wives. Do also tell us what are the prescribed duties of the prostitute."

Dāldya Rishi then replied, "In days of yore you were seven§ Apsarās—daughter of God Hūtāshana ( Fire ). Once when as ever-happy Apsarās you were sporting in the water of the Mānasa Sarobara, Nārada Rishi happened to come by the side of that lake. Self-conceited and arrogant that you were, you did not care to make obeisance to the divine Rishi and were only curious

\* *Op. cit.* Ch. CLXXVII.

† Though according to Matsya and other Purāṇas all the sixteen thousand wives were being escorted by Arjuna, and all of them were laid hold of and brutally outraged by the Abheeras.

§ These seven on the eve of their descent to the earth were by some mysterious means divided into one thousand (or sixteen thousand) maidens, as the fertile brain of the Purāṇa-makers have concocted,

to know from him how Nārāyana (i.e. God Vishnū) could be your spouse. Nārada readily spoke to you of the means and methods ; but as you overlooked to accord him the obligatory marks of reverence he ordained that after having enjoyed Nārāyana (who is said to have descended on earth in the name of Krishna) for some time, you would be bereaved of him for ever and carried away by highway robbers. Nārada's imprecation later on receiving further impetus from the beshrewing of Krishna has reduced you to such a deplorable state."

Holy Dāldya proceeded, "Well, ye women of pleasure, hear now what I say. In ancient times when in the aftermath of that long sanguine war between the Deva and the Asūra (i.e. between the Aryans and the Non-Aryans) hundreds and thousands of the wives and other women of the slain foes were found to have been forcibly ravished and left utterly helpless, the king of the Devas (i.e. Indra) took compassion in them and advised them thus : 'Now all of you should placidly take the profession of a prostitute and henceforth dwell in the city \* and the place of pilgrimage. You shall be in request equally with the royalty or the aristocracy, the father and the son. Happiness and good-luck will accrue unto you. Any man able to pay you the proper premium will be qualified to buy your favour ; but a haughty prig will be kept at arm's length by you. If, however, any reverential person visits your abode, you should make gifts of cow, land, gold coins, corn etc., to the best of your ability.

"Indra continued, 'O flaming beauties ! You should always act up to the advice of the Brāhmins. I am now dictating to you the particulars of a *Vrata*, which you should perform in implicit faith. It will free you from all worldly woes. If any Sunday falls on either *Pushyā* or *Pānarvasū Nakhsatra* (star), the woman should bathe in the medicated water and come unto the image of *Madana* (god of love) and worship him†. Thereafter each

\* In the original text the word *नृपमन्दिरम्* occurs, which should more precisely be rendered as 'a King's household'. [Vide *Matsya Purana*, Ch. LXX, Sl. 28 ]

† The *Matsya Purāna* has embodied the procedure of worship, portions of which are reproduced here and will be found extremely interesting to our Sanskrit-knowing readers. "The worshipper will touch the feet of the image with her

woman should invoke a Brāhmin with faultless features, well-versed in the principles of religion and the knowledge of the Vedas, and after paying him due adoration with scented flowers etc., should present him with a bushel of rice, a variety of the raw culinary requisites in meet quantities and a pot of clarified butter. At the time of the gift she should speak out, "By this Mādhava (God Vishnū) is rendered favourable." Thereupon the Brāhmin should be given a sumptuous repast and be deemed by the woman as रत्यर्थ कामदेवोऽयमिति (the fittest man to have coition with as the god of love himself).

" 'Next the woman should do as the Brāhmin pleases and surrender herself unconditionally to the holy man. In this way each phase of the *Vrata* is to be completed. The rules of this *Vrata* should be followed for thirteen months, after which the woman must send down to her chosen Brāhmin a set of upholstery supplemented with pillows, bed-covers, incandescent lamps, shoes, slippers, umbrellas, cushions etc.' " Dāldya Rishi here gives a long list of the presents supposed to be made out by Indra and that were to be given to the fortunate Brāhmin and his wife; among these presents utensils made of bell-metal, golden threads and rings, small gold image of the god of love (*Kāmauleva*) and his wife (*Rati*) and milch cow are mentioned.

Dāldya then proceeds with the version of Indra, " 'Thenceforward any Brāhmin who visits you on Sundays for the satisfaction of their carnal desire, pay respects unto him. Continuedly for thirteen months entertain Brahmins in this manner at your house and give yourself up to them (of course free of charge); but behave differently with other visitors' "...The Rishi now concludes, "The *Vrata* which was framed and promoted by Indra for the forlorn widows of the Dānavas is now revealed to you for your benefit. O girls with attractive faces! One who performs this

hands and utter कामाय, its thighs and will enchant मोहकारिणि, its sexual organ with the incantation कन्दर्पनिधये, its waist with प्रीतिमने, the navel with मौख्यसमुद्राय, the belly with रामाय, the chest with हृदयेनाय, the nipples with आश्लादकारिणि, the left side of the body with पुण्यचापाय, and the right side with पुण्यबाणाय, the head with मानसाय, the hair with विलोलाय and the whole body with सर्वात्मने नमः"...

*Vrata* with unflinching devotion, is lifted on into Mādhava's heaven after death and is highly admired by the society of gods." Here the great Rishi winds up his discourse on this nice rite for the prostitute which is designated as *Ananga-Vrata*.\*

Now from the above interesting but uncanny narration of the Matsya Pūrāṇa, we can glean a few particles of truth and several conclusive data which may give us an insight into the state of society at the time when the later Pūrāṇas were framed.

It may be a fact that a few of Krishna's wives or legalised concubines were abducted by a gang of Ābheera robbers after his death and that some of them had been in intrigue with Shāmba during his life-time ; but it is evident that the rest of the narrative is purely a creation of the cleverly ingenious Brāhmin brain. May be that the intrigue having been detected and brought to the notice of Krishna, he punished the female culprits by driving them out of his harem and directly or indirectly forcing them into a life of shame. Probably a Brāhmin called Dāldya gave shelter to this drifting unfortunates and taught them the art of prostitution, and he might have lived on their earnings.

Or it may be that just about the time when the Matsya Pūrāṇa was being written, a Brāhmin with the aforesaid name who wielded great influence with the ruler of the kingdom he lived in as well as with the local prostitutes (whose spiritual preceptor he might have been) concocted the scheme of *Ananga-Vrata* which no doubt opened up nice opportunities for his class to taste the beauty of the noted strumpets and also to fatten themselves by the fruits of their nocturnal labours. This vile "*Vrata*" passed into a custom not only among many of the prostitutes of the locality where Dāldya thrived, but of other parts of India where Brāhmin supremacy was in evidence. The *modus operandi* of the "*Vrata*" evinces that the worship of the naked god of love which might in some respects compare with Mutinus and Priapus was in vogue at the time. The worshipper had to handle among other limbs the sexual organ

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\* *Matsya Purana*, Ch, LXX.

of this opprobrious idol and to utter the mystic incantation "*Kandarpa Nidhaye*". Proofs, though not sufficiently convincing, are available which go to show that the worship of the love-god with all its overbearing ramifications persisted throughout the Middle Age.

The introduction of the *Ananga-Vrata* and certain other rites clearly brings to light the abnormal abuse of the Brahminic power and the rapid deterioration of its original high ideal. A majority the Pūrāṇa makers of the later times went to all lengths in extolling these pious trickeries of the priestcraft and imprinting on them a *fleur-de-lis* of divine sanction. But the growing refinements of Civilisation and intelligence of the Commonality chiefly for whom these rites were devised and on whose ignorance the Hindu Episcopacy had been feeding fat, gradually saw through these mawkish manœuvres and tried to militate against them. Many kings and Kshatriya free-thinkers since the time of the *Upanishad* had been exerting their nerves to impound the power of the priestcraft, and atlast raised a standard of revolt against it. A keen and continuous struggle for supremacy went on between the Kshatriya and the Brāhmin for centuries in India, and in it the Brahmins at first fared no better. But after the ravage of the Mahābhārata War which blasted most of the flowers of the Kshatriya community, the priestcraft gradually gathered forces and most imperceptibly reached out its gigantic suckers like an octopus to bring the State and its people within its greedy grip. But the latter were just in time to realise the situation and think out means to save it. The grip of the "Church" was afterwards to some extent relaxed only to tighten more firmly with the progress of time. Everybody became again helpless in the hands of the priests.

When the charivari of religious discontentment rose to the highest pitch in the seventh century B. C., Buddha was born in a royal family of Northern India to establish a religion that would free the people from cowering before and paying their costly homage to the gods (?) and their inevitable intermediaries. This religion atonce captured the imagination of the kings and the people ; and the Hindu priesthood had now to turn their whole



energy to nip the unexpected foe in the bud. But at the end of about three centuries' desperate attempt, the Brāhmins only saw to their utter dismay and chagrin that the bud had bloomed into a big flower and was distributing its mild fragrance not only throughout the length and breadth of India but even to the remotest part of the world. From the fifth century B. C. down to the time of Asoka during which raged a furious strife between Hinduism and Buddhism, the Brāhmins on one hand revised their old canonical laws and added many newer *Vratas* etc. on the other, the former thus losing their original rigidity and the latter being draped with as much alluring a garb as possible.

The Pūrānas in fact were so many influential organs of the priestly class. Fac-similes were made from the original manuscript and preserved by every respectable parson who palmed them off as immutable creations of the long-by-gone, omniscient Rishis of the Vedic and Epic ages, and read them before his parishioners on the holy days. Of course, the *Vratas*, the *Teerthas* and the astounding properties of certain rivers were for apparent reasons laid the greatest stress upon. The priests fabricated most odious stories to illustrate the efficacy of making a precious gift to the Brāhmin and of an immersion in the so-called "holy" rivers. Thus they have gone to the length of bringing about an unholy connection between a mother and a son<sup>1</sup> or a brother and a sister<sup>2</sup> under most romantically tragic circumstances, in order to show how easily their heinous sin was purged off after paying heavy premia to the priests and bathing in the sanctified water of the Jamūnā and the Godāvari. By this they might have indirectly open up the lion-gate of incest to those subconsciously disposed, as it virtually made suppression unnecessary and sin as easily washable as a dirty hand-kerchief.

We cannot withhold the temptation of giving here the extract of a story recorded in the *Padma Pūrāna* which though mostly bears a distinct Kshatriya stamp has been in many places tampered with by the Brāhminic pen—perhaps the pen of a copyist, a manuscript-

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<sup>1</sup> *Brahma Purana*, (Bangavasee Edition) p. 389; *Skanda Purana*, Br. Khand, S. M., Ch. XXXV.

<sup>2</sup> *Baraha Purana*, Chs. CLXXV & CLXVI.

preserver or a subsequent editor. Once upon a time a young Brāhmin well-versed in the *Ve-lus* and scriptures went to a small city called Prāttalikapūra and sought hospitality in the house of another Brāhmin. The latter's quarters stood within the residential compound of a young lady of prepossessing appearance, the widowed, expatriated ex-queen of a neighbouring kingdom. When the Brāhmin youth was taking his after-dinner rest in his lonely apartment, the said ex-queen with all her rare jewellery worth sixty millions on, entered the room and introduced herself in a fascinating style. The Brāhmin mildly resented this un-called-for visit of a young lady at night, at which the Kshatriyā widow replied, "Incidentally and in a sojourn, a place of pilgrimage, and in times of anarchy, famine and fire, a tete-a-tete is not objectionable. Moreover, I must be free in the precincts of my own residence ; why should I be afraid to speak with you !" But the Brāhmin still persistently urged her to go back to her own quarters and gave her a decisive cold shoulder.

The Kshatriyā lady was not to be foiled so easily. She came out and deliberated, "I must have him by hook or by crook. I will presently begin to weep aloud near the door-step of my house and this will forsooth make the otherwise catholic Brāhmin come running to my side. He will no doubt give me timely consolation and offer me his hand to lift me from the ground. I must accept it and in the course of rising, place my creeper-like hands round his neck. At that moment keeping my erected nipples pressed against his body, I will show myself as in a swoon. The Brāhmin observing me speechless and immobile, will carefully sit on the ground with myself clung to him, and most probably hold me in his lap. Then with my vestments all purposely shuffled and displaced, I will give out suppressed sobs by fits and starts. In this manner, I shall manage to unfold in his view my abode of lust with the size of a ripe *Ashwattha* (*Ficus Religiosa*) leaf, pleasing to the eye, neatly depilated and richly perfumed\*.

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सुखिन्ध रोमरहितम् पक्वान्धदलाकृति ।

दर्शयिष्यामि तत्स्थानम् कामगेहो सुगन्धि च ॥

—*Op. cit.*, Ch. LXV, Sl. 17.

I will writhe and roll about on his lap till his loin-cloth is gradually removed. By these means, I will beget temptation in him and bring him my into my fold”.

She mused on, “A man can keep his heart adamant as long he does not behold a thing (a woman). The heart melts as soon as it comes into his view. If a sight cannot move it, familiar conversation can. Even if that fails, an insinuating smile will soften it. Where a smile fails, a gentle touch succeeds, The heart finally stoops low if the man gets the chance of beholding or feeling the private parts of a woman.” Then the love-obsessed Kshatriyā sums up : “For aught I know, there is no young man whose heart does not melt nor does his sexual organ secrete at the sight and touch of a pair of feminine arms, breasts and the *pudendum*\*.”

Her diagnosis proved to be literally correct and her will was done. The Brāhmin enjoyed the ex-queen of exquisite beauty for hundred long springs without remorse or retribution.

*Skanda* furnishes another instance. A certain die-hard gambler used to blaspheme the gods and slander the Brāhmins to his heart's content. He was one of the worst fornicators that could be found. One day having won a large sum of money on gambling, he had bought heaps of flowers, nosegays, betels and sandal for his favourite mistress and was rushing post-haste along the street to win her smile. But fortunately or unfortunately for him, his feet slipped and he fell senseless on the ground. On recovering consciousness, a sense of piety suddenly awoke within him and he offered all the strewn flowers meant for a filthy whore in favour of God Shiva. Nevertheless it pleased the ungrudging God in heaven.

Soon after the man died and was brought to the Purgatory before the King of Hades. The impartial judge of an infernal Yama decreed that he should forthwith be cast into an eternal damnation ; but his Private Secretary intervened and prayed for his

बाह्मूलकचन्द्र-योनिस्यर्जनदर्शनात् ।

कस्य न सखलने चित्तं रितः स्वप्न नो भवेत् ॥

—*Ibid*, Sl. 22.

release on the ground that some time before his death, he had offered an oblation to the Supreme Soul, Shiva, by means of scented flowers. Yama rescinded his decree and issued a fresh order to the effect that the man must enjoy Indra's heaven as its king for three hours. During his ephemeral incumbency, the man gave away every precious thing of heaven to the deserving persons and had become so wonderfully temperate as to dismiss the suggestion of relishing *ex-officio* the unabated beauty of the divine queen, Sachee. Indra having regained his throne at the end of three hours, came to the boudoir of Sachee and said unto his wife, "Well, dear, the gambler must have put himself in possession of you. Now tell me in detail all about your sexual pleasures with him." Rigidly virtuous Sachee remarked with a chuckle, "Everything looks yellow in the jaundiced eye\*...."

There lived a certain *veshyā* named Mohini in the town of Mahishmati on the bank of Narmadā. She was skilled in all the arts required by her profession and possessed of youth and beauty. This woman committed many acts of sin all throughout her odious life. She murdered seven Brāhmins and many slave-girls as well. She had induced many abortions on these poor servant-maids. At last Mohini's lustre of youth faded out and grim darkness of old age descended on her. One by one her customers broke off and she could no more attract the pleasure-seeking young dandies. This prostitute had amassed, however, a big fortune and all throughout been vindictively closefisted.

But amidst the long, glamourless and remorseful days her mind underwent a thorough change; she loosened her purse-strings as she toned up all the tender strings of her heart. Before long many guest-houses, tanks, wells, temples etc. sprang up in the neighbourhood of the city with the hard-earned money of the then charitably-disposed Mohini. She gave away the remainder of her gold and silver to all her serving maids and foreigners domiciled in the city, and thus became a self-made pauper. Morbidity on the other hand was now fast taking hold of her. At this crucial moment all her maid-servants and friends

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\* *Skanda Purana*, Maheshwar Khanda, K. Kh., Ch. XXVIII Sl. 53—84.

had melted away save one named Jaradgabā who stood by and nursed her in selfless devotion. At last when Mohini came round a little, she started for a secluded forest to live in the rest of her days. But she was waylaid by robbers who had known her to be a rich courtesan and left her mortally wounded when she could give them nothing. The poor woman was dying when a certain forest-anchorite came across her, and quickly poured into her gaping mouth a few draughts of the holy water of Prayāga Teertha (modern Allahabad where the rivers Gangā and Jamūnā form a confluence). Mohini having quenched her last thirst wished in her heart to become a queen in her next mortal life, and peacefully passed away.

The Pūrāna-maker or the interpolator who must have lived somewhere near this *Teertha*, has, in advertising the holiness of the water of the Gangā-Jamūnā confluence, betrayed himself into an incredible far-sightedness which avers that Mohini's last wish did not go in vain; that she was born in the family of a Kerala King and afterwards married to a Dravidian Chief named Veeravarmā\*. Nevertheless, the rest of the legend may be taken as a fact, as we find many counter-parts of Mohini in ancient and modern world. In fabricating or recording stories of this kind, some piously straight Brāhmins might have had a nobler end in view, i. e. to place "the aureole of pardon on the brows of the stigmatised"—to hold out hopes of rehabilitation and redemption in this life and that hereafter to the sinning mankind. But the ways and means by which they could be obtained were either abjectly material or ludicrously yielding. Riches could buy what should have been bought for tears; a drop of the so-called holy water, an offering of a handful of flowers in a slipshod fashion or a petty gift to the Brahmin could procure what should have been available with an enduring penance and fervent prayers. Buddhism, however, soon dispelled the disillusionment of this method.

Manū and the later Samhitas placed all foods dressed by the hands of a *ganikā* and the people of a *gana* in the same category

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\* *Op. cit.*, Uttara Khanda, Ch. CCXX,

and accentuated them as fruits of the forbidden tree. The Pūrāna-makers did not find any occasion to emend this ruling and like their predecessors earmarked other persons whose foods were equally despicable and worthy of being eschewed by all decent people. They reiterated with greater force that the foods of the king, the actor, the dancer, the carpenter, the shoe-maker or cobbler etc. were as noisome as those of the *guna* and the *ganika*\*. The food prepared or offered by an unchaste woman, a hen-pecked husband and one who shelters a paramour of his wife under his roof continued to be a taboo during this period. But suffice it to say that the people often snapped their fingers at these religio-social laws with impunity,—the higher classes openly and the proletariat secretly. The Brāhmin relishing with a gusto all the dainty dishes served by the hand of an infamous *ganika* during the performance of the *Ananga-Vrata* bears a striking testimony to this assertion.

Some of the subsequent Pūrānas have recorded somewhat perfunctorily the penitentials and penal codes extant at the time in the principality where the particular Pūrāna-writer flourished. But *Matsya* has shewn a special zeal towards them and rather taken up an extensive space in their elucidation. Some relevant portions are worthy of our notice here. This Pūrāna almost in tune with Jānavaalkya says that it ill behoves a person to have a tete-a-tete with an unknown or unrelated lady. If any body even after being sufficiently admonished makes bold to commit such an act, he should be sentenced to pay a fine with gold coins †.

\* *Kurma Purana*, Ex. Pt., Ch. XVII, Sl. 4.

The word राजान्न in the text probably means the so-called 'loaves and fishes' of office in a royal court or household. Pandit P. Tarkaratna has rendered राजान्न as a hotel.

† *Agni Purana* has extended the scope of and amended this section of the law a little. It says that if any body is detected to handle wilfully the garment-knots at the waist (नीवि), the corset above the breast, the parts from navel downwards or to fondle the hair of another's wife; or to talk familiarly with her in a solitary, crowded or dark place; or to sit beside her on the same seat, is to be punished with a fine. If after receiving a warning, a man and a woman are found engaged

But one who addresses, rambles or exchanges jocular remarks with a woman accustomed to surrender her body for the pleasure of others, will meet with very little penalty. On the other hand, on who molests a maid servant of any denomination or a woman avowed to the life of a nun, will receive capital punishment. But if the intercourse is proved to have taken place on mutual consent, the male partner will be heavily fined, while the female will go scot-free\*. It is necessary to interpose here that the master of the maid-servant was seldom punished for this offence, because of the prevailing age-old and universal idea that wives, concubines and servants were exclusive properties of their masters and the latter could make use of them anyway they liked, though murdering them without sufficient cause of provocation was taken cognizance of by the law. The master was also punishable by not a very heavy fine if he was found out to have caused an abortion on a maid-servant.

If cases of bestiality came within the jurisdiction of the court, it punished the guilty by having his head shaved then and there in the court-compound and compelling him to offer the outraged animal a few morsels of food. But a cow-molester was sentenced to pay a fine in gold coins. If a priest was found on evidence to have had an intercourse with a prostitute, he was only fined with a sum equal to the fees he paid for his shameful pleasure. It was indeed a punishment consistent with the dignity of a priest ! If any body engaged a prostitute for himself, but afterwards threw her over to the lust of another, such a man was to be punished with a fine of one *māshā* of gold.

One who settles a price for pleasure with a woman of the town and then declines to enjoy her, must pay the woman a compensation twice the fees stipulated for. On the man's refusal of payment and the matter having come to the court, he will be sentenced to a fine amounting to four times her fees. If several friends in a company visit a whore and without any previous understanding cohabits with her one after the other, her demand

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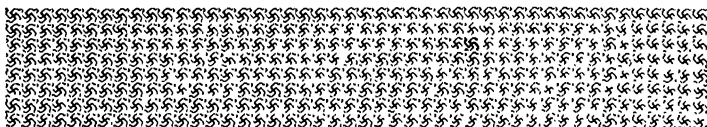
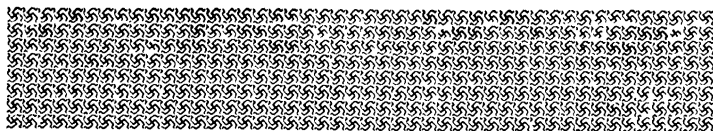
in a private talk, both of them will be fined 200 *panas* each. (*Op. cit.*, Ch. CCLVIII, Sl. 69-70.)

\* *Matsya P.*, Ch. CCXXVII, Sl. 123-128.





# History of Prostitution in India, Vol. I



How unchastity was punished in Hell.

[ To face page 153.

for double the proper fees from each of them is no doubt justifiable. If that is denied and the aggrieved party makes a petition to the court, each of the culprits will be liable to pay four times her fees\*.

Buddhism with its new, moralising tone gave the dignitaries of Hindu religion an opportunity to mend their ways and purify their methods. But the amendment was done sometimes with reluctance and at other in a spirit of spite and rivalry. The idea of paradise though arose earlier, yet its scope and amenities were tremendously enhanced and made much more alluring than before ; at the same time the necessity of a counter-heaven was keenly felt by the Aryan Episcopacy. Hence a full-fledged hell with a purgatory attached (नरक) soon crystalised in the heart of the Hindu religion ; sins and their corresponding punishments were enunciated with hair-splitting exactitude though all the Pūrānas were not unanimous on the clauses of the infernal Penal Code and differed in many places in respect of the nature of punishment one was to undergo for a particular kind of sin. Thus was created for the credulous and docile mass mind a bogey of restraint which has served its end, of course with some reserve, up till the present age, although it could neither stand the reason of a scrutinisingly intelligent brain nor could it destroy the proclivities of a strong criminal nature. Many persisting hereditary complexes leading to national deterioration can be ascribed to the workings of this horrible conception. It cannot be co-ordinated with and in many respects has proved to be more pernicious than, the Christian notion of damnation.

Almost all the Pūrānas barring the earlier few, have been approvers of this make-believe tenet. A woman who betrays her conjugal relation is subjected to a series of singularly severe punishments in hell, First she is compelled to lie over a hot bed of iron ; then she is thrown over into the arms of one or more iron-made creatures of a nondescript type who are said to be always red-

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\* *Op. cit.*, Sl. 144-149.

*Agni Purana* has, however, fixed the amount of the fine as twenty four *panas*, but the plaintiff is to prove that the visitors have enjoyed her against her express negation. This Pūrāna has also recommended a fine of ten *panas* for the man who cohabits with a whore per force or for nothing.

hot both physically and mentally. They are set on the culprit to molest her in any manner they fancy. The poor soul is exposed to this form of punishment continually for one hundred years, during which she is made to bathe in a pool with highly alkaline water, to live in a dug-out full of putrid night-soil, to subsist on its filthy vermins and to drink urine. Next phase sees her sojourning through the different tyrannising departments of hell to be finally cast down to the earth to enter the womb of a low-caste woman.

The rigor on feminine modesty and liberty had all the more been intensified during this period. The women were gradually reduced to slavery and had been taught from their childhood a spirit of submission to their male relatives and particularly to their prospective husbands. The custom of the *Suttee* or self-immolation of widows were introduced, and the latest Pūrānas took all means, fair and foul, in propagating and popularising this inequitable system. After all, it remains a fact that more widows were burned on the funeral pyres of their husbands against their will than those who voluntarily dedicated their lives on them. Thus Deerghatamā's unilateral law of chastity after so many centuries' assiduous working at last found a bonfire of victory blazing for it with the charred bodies of Hindu widows.

Pūrānas have laid down that the woman attached body and soul to one husband is called a *Pativrata*, whereas one who lends her couch to two husbands (or paramours) is a *Kūlata*, to three is a *Dharsini*, to four is a *Pungschalee*, and to five is branded a *Veshya*. The woman who gives herself to people more than five in number is to be known as a *Mahāveshya* (great prostitute). One or two Pūrānas have feebly and summarily set down that a man who cohabits with any of the above five classes of women is exposed to various sorts of penalty and sent back to the earth to take birth from the matrix of a beast or with the shape of *Salmali* tree\*. No specific mention is, however, made in regard to the *post-mortem* punishment adopted for the professional or hereditary prostitute.

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\* *Brahma Vaivarta Purana*, Prak. Kh., Ch. 28.

*Salmali* is silk-cotten tree.

All the same, prostitution came to stay and thrive in India. It had formed an integral part of the civil and military life. In order to show that even the *Devas* (many of whom were out-standing personalities passed into divinity after death) were not free from the sins of the flesh, innumerable legends and folk-lore had been woven from the time immemorial. That the denizens of heaven often delighted in transgressing the boundary of marriage-morals and felt the necessity of extra-marital intercourse, is borne out by the creation of Urvashi, Menakā, Ghritāchee and a host of other courtezans. The affairs and inclinations of heaven were but the heightened replica of those of the material world. As we have said before, the *veshyās* were taken as the safety-valves of a highly organised and refined society ; the best course that had been thought out was without an attempt at their total extinction to sustain them within proper limits and to acknowledge their status as human beings\*. Gradually they came under the ægis of the law though they had long before been recognised by religion.

The kings and the nobility had been the greatest patronisers of the *ganika* from the very dawn of the Epic Age. We have seen how they became indispensable adornments of the harems of the principal ruling houses of North India at the time of the *Mahābhārata* and formed insuperable accessory to the camp-life. Outturn soon increased with the increase of demand ; and slave girls, prostitutes and concubines virtually began to rule the whole financial market. The son of a *veshyā* or a fornicatress wrote scriptures, composed poems and discoursed on philosophy ; the people neither derided nor did they dishearten him. The

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\* The author of the *Garurha Purana* seems to have carefully studied the dark side of the life of a prostitute. He ruefully represents that the sleep of the prostitute is dependent on another's whim ; their life's drudgery is to follow other's dispositions, to keep their lips brightened up always with a smile in spite of sorrow, to lend their body to any one who pays and to nurture manifold anxieties in their heart. Finally perhaps under the claws of some nefarious visitor they will meet their death, which they think so much desirable.—*Op. cit.*, Purva Khanda, Ch. CXIV, Sl. 12.

great compiler of the *Mahābhārata* compared the blood-besattered battle-field of Kūrūkshetra with a scarlet-robed courtesan. After the crushing defeat of the Kauravas in the war, when the bereaved, destitute Emperor, Dhritarāshtra, with his lamenting gynecium, was making for the venue of contest, the condoling *veshyās* of the capital followed his trail\*. Even the inimitably pure Rāmachandra asked Bharata whether he had been recreating himself at times with the horse, the elephant and the *ganikā*, as these were then deemed as the most natural equipments of a prince's household.

After the Mahābhārata War, the pampering and coddling of the prostitutes by the State and the rich people was curtailed by the puritanic priests who had just then begun to assert their power. Prostitution was brought within its reasonable boundaries and a transgression from either side was heavily punished. For a time a perfectly serene atmosphere prevailed in the society and the state. But when the morale of the Brāhminic religion commenced to deteriorate, and selfishness, narrow-mindedness and sectarianism sprung up amongst its custodians, a recrudescence of immorality became everywhere evident. The Pūrānas began freely to incorporate the names and lives of real and imaginary *veshyās* in their pages; the priests mostly for selfish reasons gave them such an extent of license that they ventured to unfold their variegated wings even to ensnare Brahmā, Vishnū and Shiva—the three holiest Entities of the Hindu Trinity†. Strange that they could neither annul the curse of a whore nor could they withhold the temptations of the “flesh”! Some of the Pūrānas most brazen-facedly described in a flippant and lascivious language the courtship and sexual congress of the anthropomorphised God and His Consort‡. They have not in any way shrunk to project their incestuous impulse on the character

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\* *The Mahabharata*, Stree Parva, Ch. 104 (K. P. Sinha's Bengali edition).

† *Brahma Vaivarta Purana*, Sree Krishna-Janma Khanda, Chs. 119, 120, 121 etc.

‡ *Op. cit.* (K. K. Vidyabhusan's Bengali version in poetry form) Pp. 350, 424, 427, 507, 508 etc.

of Brahmā the Holy Creator whom they have made to run after His own daughter\*.

During the age under our review, not only the worship of the love-god, but also of his wife, *Rati*, was rampant among all classes of people. Perhaps the Greek influence was responsible for its introduction. Adoration of phallic emblems became the order of the day, though throughout the earlier part of the Epic Age it was depreciated and made away with by all classes of decent people. We have already remarked that this hideous form of worship most likely originated in the society of the primitive non-Aryans in a natural course and afterwards absorbed into the Aryan Society. Even the very idea and procedure of formal worship were borrowed from the Dravidian culture, the South Indian पूजा being afterwards transformed into North Indian पूजा. During the greater part of the Vedic Age phallic worship had only been countenanced by the lower rungs of the society. But during the decadence of the Brahminic morals, it revived among all classes of the Indian people never to die. A few centuries before Christ, when the mysterious power of sex were being made much of and polytheism was finding a greater scope for its growth with the more intensive idealization of man's own faculties, desires and impulses, the ancient phallic emblem received the dignified appellation of *Shivalinga* (i.e. the sexual organ of God Shiva).

Myths were made up by the wily priests to grapple the credulity of the people once more to their best advantage, and the Pūrānas were not slow in recording the incident which had led to the origin of this indecent emblem. *Kurma Pūrāna* describes how Mahādeva (Shiva) once had the quaint hobby to get Vishnū attired as a woman and himself go stark naked to Devadārūvana (a forest) with the latter with a view to test the forbearance of the hermits living therein. The sons of the Rishis went mad over the beauty of that strange sauntering lady (Vishnū in disguise) and they all followed her with a burning desire wherever she went.

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\* प्रजापति पुरा विप्रा स्त्रां दुहितरं सुदा ।

वाङ् नाक्षी कामुकी भूत्वा स्पृष्टयामास मोहज्ज ॥

—*Skanda P.*, B. Kh., S.M., Ch. XXXX.

Whereas on the other hand, the daughters and daughters-in-law of the hermits were simply enchanted with the disrobed grace of that resplendent youth (Shiva in disguise) and frantically ran after him *en masse* to offer their precious womanhood.

With this train of solicitous, hankering and dangling souls, they were moving out of the forest, when the Mūnis, apprised of the fact, came running there in a body and caught the mischievous pair red-handed. Vishnū probably made good his escape during the tumult that followed. But Shiva was almost made senseless by the belabouring hands of the revengeful Rishis who even mercilessly chopped off His organ of generation. As soon as "the holy limb" fell on the ground, it began to assume a stupendous size and finally pervaded the whole of the universe. Brahmā and Vishnū made their entrance into this *Linga* of illimitable proportion to decry its top and bottom, but to no purpose. To crown all, Shiva afterwards formulated the law that everybody must thereafter worship not his image, but his phallic emblem in unswerving faith and devotion \*.

But before such a salacious symbol, it was unreasonable to expect decency and devotion of the people endowed with average sanity and reason. It took years to make decent people bow their heads in veneration before the "Shivalinga" which, we may venture to presume, at first attracted to its altar only the women of the town, their patrons and the pimps. Although the shape and size of the divine phallus was in course of time changed to a certain extent and many metaphysical interpretations were added to its cult, a section of the people could not acquiesce to it, and apostatised to form themselves into a different Hindu sect or religious community as distinguished from the *Shaivas* and *Lingayets*.

There was another salient reason which was responsible for the extension of so much political and religious enfranchisement to

\* *Kurma P.*, Ch. XXXVII; *Skanda P.*, Maheshwara Kh. Ch. VI; etc.

*Skanda* has left out the Vishnu incident altogether. Mahadeva went alone to Devādāruvana or "Dāruvana" as this Purana has represented.

the harlots. Proselytism of the Buddhist religion had begun from the lowest rung of the social ladder. Its chief mission was to uplift the down-trodden, the poor and the sinning, and bring everybody under the regime of a religious communism. So it had chosen the prostitutes and their constituents as one of its first objects of reclamation just like Christianity. We shall find in another chapter how the doctrines of this new religion stirred the depths of their heart and how they were going out of the folds of the Hindu religion in numbers to embrace Buddhism. By holding out some alluring privileges, the dignitaries of Hinduism probably wanted to stop this exodus.

Hence prostitution had to be raised on a pedestal not much lower than that of the respectable matron. Kautilya in his valuable treatise on Hindu polity did not forget to mention the posts a retiring prostitute could be appointed to in a royal household. She could be engaged as a midwife or a nurse, a cook or even as a queen's maid of honour \*. *Vishnu Samhita* proclaimed with authority that to circumambulate a prostitute was an auspicious observance †. *Matsya Purana* has placed the "veshya" among other objects as portending good luck, if anybody falls across her at the time of starting for a place. What more Hindu society and religion could bestow on these dealers in sensuality? In many places of Southern India the indispensable *Mangala-sutram* (thread to be tied round the wrist) of a new bride was, and still is, made by the hands of a prostitute; while in North-eastern India a handful of earth from the threshold of a strumpet's house is still required in the making of the holy image of goddess Durga.

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\* Kautilya—*Arthashastra* P. II. Ch. XXVIII; P. I. Ch. 20:

† *Vishnu S.*, 63, 29.



## CHAPTER VII.

### THE BUDDHA AND THE COURTESANS.

The Buddhist Period may be said to extend from the beginning of 600 B. C. to 600 A. D.,—a span of about 1000 years. This period is pregnant with the astounding achievements of the great founders of world religions and vast empires like the Lord Buddha, Bardhamāna Mahāveera, Chandragūpta Maūrya, Emperor Asoka, Kanishka, Samūdragūpta and Chandragūpta Vikramāditya; and it is with the Maurya dynasty that the predominance of mythical elements dies away for ever and almost dependable, authentic history of India begins.

Gautama Buddha, the founder of Buddhism was born of a Sākya (Kshatriya) Chief named Suddhodhana at Kapilavastu, the capital of a small territory at the foot of the Himālayas. As the young prince advanced in years, he proved himself strangely sensitive and profoundly affected by the sorrows and sufferings in the living world around him. Even in his boyhood he was seen to be dropping at times into a dreamy, contemplative mood. Neccessarily he had to be brought up throughout his youth in the most luxurious and convivial atmosphere of the court, as the king had apprehended that the boy would otherwise renounce the world and turn an ascetic. He was kept surrounded by a troop of the most winsome courtesans and dancing girls who vied with one another to please this susceptible prince and capture his heart. Scantly clad in thin transparent costumes which far from covering their beautiful bodies devastatingly exposed all the

suave contours and arches of their fine figure, each one of these lovely maidens possessed enough wit with their charming manners, alluring postures, amorous gestures, rythmatic dances and melliferous songs to lure the prince into the sins of the flesh\*. So the young prince grew up as any other young man of his rank and day, enjoying all the pleasures accessible to him. He was by nature disinclined to marry, but at last prevailed upon by the persistent demand of his father's court and perhaps also by the bewitching eyes of the noble Yasodharā.

Soon after the birth of the first child, the great Call came from within, and one day Gautama left at the dead of night his father's palace with his sleeping wife and baby, a looming throne, untold treasures and the lovely harem-girls, to solve the riddle of the universe and the end of all existence. After years of patient striving in incredible austerities and deep meditation, "Light of the Supreme Knowledge" at last dawned upon him under the sacred tree at Bodh Gaya in Magadha. Then he founded a new School of philosophy—in many respects consistent with the truths of the Hindu *Upanishadas* and *Sankhya Darshana*, and laid down the rules of an ideal life which aimed at purity in thought, word and deed. He practically ignored the existence of God and His relation to mankind, though he seldom cared to prove His nonentity by sophism, thus opening up a channel for the growth of the doctrine of agnosticism. He preached his doctrines for the first time to a handful of pious people at Benares who became afterwards his Apostles and propagated the cause of his new religion. The Buddha wandered the rest of his life preaching his doctrines through Magadha and the outlying kingdoms in the North and the West, and died probably in the year 543 B. C.

Now it will be proper for us to enumerate the kingdoms traversed by this great sage and the contemporaneous kings and courtesans that came in contact with him. At the time, the neigh-

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- \* (a) Rhys Davids—*Buddhist Birth Stories*, p. 171.
  - (b) *Mahavamsa* p. 227.
  - (c) *Dhammapada Commentary* III, pp. 166 and 297.
  - (d) *Digha Nikaya* (Dialogues of Buddha) I, p. 507.

bouring realm of Kosala, mostly corresponding with the modern province of Oudh, was closely connected to Magadha by many ties and the smaller kingdom of Kāshi had apparently lost its independence and been annexed by Kosala. These two kingdoms were the scene of Buddha's earliest public preachings, and have occupied prominent places in the archives of Buddhistic Church History. The centre of Hindu religious revival and political power was fast shifting to this part of the country, where Jainism also tried with partial success in creating a stronghold. No wonder therefore that the Buddhist, Jain and later Brahmanical books tell us so much about the history of Magadha, Anga, Kosala, Kāshi and Vaisāli, and leave us in comparative darkness concerning the history of other parts of India. Some of the noted courtezans of the time practised at the towns of these kingdoms; many of them, as we shall see later, moved by the persuasive eloquence and great personal attraction of the Great Buddha became his disciples and gladly abandoned art for austerity and palace for penitential groves.

In Pauranic texts the earliest dynasty that can claim historical reality is known as the Saisunāga, from the name of its founder Sisunāga or Sisunāka \*. He was a Raja of a petty state corresponding roughly with the present Pātna and Gayā districts; his capital was Rājagriha (Rājgir) among the low hills near Gayā. Nothing is known about his activities except that he placed his son at Benares. The first monarch about whom anything substantial can be known is Bimbisāra, the fifth of his line. He is accredited with the building of the New Rājagriha, the outer town in the north of the ring of hills encircling the ancient fort, and with the annexation of Anga, the smaller kingdom to the East (modern districts of Bhāgalpur and Monghyr). He also strengthened his position by matrimonial alliances with the more powerful rulers of the neighbouring states, taking one consort from the royal family of Kosala, and another from the Lichchhavi clan at Vaisāli. The latter lady was the mother of Prince Ajātasatru.

Bimbisāra was a fine connoisseur of women and a great

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\* Pargiter—*J. R. A. S.*, 1915, p. 146; *Matsya & Vāyu Purānas*.

patron of the leading courtezans of Vaisali and Rājagriha. He visited Ambapāli (Āmrapāli) the most renowned and cultured hetaira of Vaisāli, and enjoyed her fine wits and great humour along with her lovely body consecutively for seven days. In the democratic land of Vaisāli there was a peculiar custom that a physically perfect maiden would never be allowed to marry, but was to be kept reserved for the pleasures of the people. Ambapāli had a low origin and was born in the king's garden at the foot of a mango-tree. She was brought up by the gardener of the palace and came to be known as "Āmrapāli" or "Ambapāli". When she budded into adolescence, everyone was astounded with her overwhelming beauty, natural heritage of grace and poise with an wonderful aptitude for learning. The rulers of the confederacy forestalled that there would be a strife amongst the neighbouring princes over the possession of this golden apple, and she was therefore consigned to the life of a courtesan to be enjoyed by all who could well afford.

Ambapāli besides being in time exceedingly clever in all the art and artifices of her trade, became highly cultured and vastly educated. She was the authoress of one of the best pieces of lyric poem in the *Therīgāthā* collection. The poem is the finest as regards style, rhyme, diction and clarity of thought of that period and deals chiefly with the contention that centred round a handsome and highly endowed princess of Vaisāli whom many of the young blood of royal families strove to win as their bride, until it was decided by the authorities of the state to stigmatise her as a common *ganikā* to bring further bloodshed to an end. The poem is but a passionately allegorical and pathetic representation of the incidents, aspirations and lost possibilities of her own life.

Gifted as she was with a heritage of the most bewitching beauty and the perfect attainments she had in the arts of singing, dancing and lute-playing coupled with her high culture and refined wits, she had become the centre of adoration of all the neighbouring states so much so that the enamoured admirers from the king and rich fops down to the poor men of letters all flocked to her side to profit by whatever little favour she chose

to deign. She used to charge fifty *kāḥapanas* for one night\*; and the money she thus amassed could throw into shade the treasury of a king. In fact, the pride and prosperity of Vaisāli was for some time mainly ascribed to her. There is nothing to wonder at if King Bimbisāra had persuaded himself to spend seven nights in the retreat of this celebrated hetaira, drinking to the dregs the nectar of sexual pleasure. He left, however, the seal of his exalted presence in the shape of an embryo in her womb, and she is said to have gladly borne him a son who was later known as *Abhaya* (fearless).

Her son subsequently took to the Bhuddhist holy order under the name of Vimalakondanna, and it was his influence that wrought Ambapālī's conversion to the Great Buddha's faith. One day Ambapālī heard that the Buddha was stopping by the side of her vast orchard; out of a sacred curiosity she went out to have a look at him. Here *Fo-Sho-Hing-Tsan-King*† vividly depicts how Ambapālī approached Gautama and what was the first impression of the latter about her. The celebrated Lady Āmra (i. e. Ambapālī), the author proceeds, well-disposed to the Buddha went to the garden followed by her waiting maids whilst the school students and scholars paid their respects unto her. "Thus with circumspection and self-restraint, her person lightly and plainly clothed, putting away all her ornamental robes and all adornments of scents and flowers, as a prudent and virtuous woman goes forth to perform her religious duties, so she went on, beautiful to look upon, like any Devi in appearance.

"Buddha seeing the lady in the distance approaching, spoke thus to all the Bhikkhus: 'This woman is indeed exceedingly beautiful, able to fascinate the minds (feelings) of the religious; now then, keep your recollection straight; let wisdom keep your mind in subjection. Better fall into the fierce tiger's mouth, or under the sharp knife of the executioner, than to dwell with a

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\* *Vinaya Texts*, Pt. II., p. 171.

† Or "A Life of Buddha" by Asvaghosha Bodhisattva, translated from Sanskrit into Chinese by Dharmaraksha (A. D. 420) and from Chinese into English by Samuel Beal (in *The Sacred Books of the East*. Vol. XIX.)

woman and excite in yourselves lustful thoughts. A woman is anxious to exhibit her form and shape (bewitching movements or airs), whether walking, standing, sitting or sleeping. Even when represented as a picture, she desires most of all to set off the blandishments of her beauty and thus to rob men of their steadfast heart ! How then ought you to guard yourselves ?

"By regarding her tears and her smiles as enemies, her stooping form, her hanging arms and all her disentangled hair as toils designed to entrap man's heart. Then how much more (should you suspect) her studied, amorous beauty ! when she displays her dainty outline, her richly ornamented form and chatters gaily with the foolish man ! Ah, then ! what perturbation and what evil thoughts, not seeing underneath the horrid, tainted shape, the sorrows of impermanence, the impurity, the unreality !...

And now that Āmra lady gradually approached the presence of the lord,...her outward form restrained, her heart composed, bowing her head at Buddha's feet, she took her place as the lord bade her\*."...

Then the holy man preached *Dhamma* (rules of an ideal life) to her, and the courtesan was so impressed that she forthwith invited him to dine in her house. The Lichchhavis asked the Buddha to take his repast at their place on the following day, but he refused. Next day Gautama had, a most sumptuous regale at the courtesan's residence ; he then stayed for a time in the garden-house (*Arāma*) offered by her with a retinue of his followers †. Such a close contact with the Holy Lord must have made Ambapālī grow indifferent to her profession.

Soon after this, young Abhaya who had taken the vows of a Buddhist monk, was one day reading a sermon on the high ideals and established standard of the new religion to a congregation in which his meticulous mother happened to be present. Ambapālī was so much affected by the preaching that she did not wait long to join the holy order leaving aside for good her life of unholy commerce. The rays of her natural charms lingered even at the late evening of her life, and many *Bhikkhus*

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\* Op. cit., pp. 253-255.

† *Digha Nikaya* II, pp. 95 & 98 ; *Vinaya Pitaka* I, p. 231-33.

(Buddhist monks) went off their head at the sight of this aged nun. Ānanda who perceived this strong unaffected attraction of the old lady proving detrimental to the minds of the young monks, read them a stiff and lengthy homily on the evanescence of feminine charms. But unfortunately history is silent on the point if this had had the desired effect.

Ujjaini at that time was proud of another courtesan by the name of Padumavati. No sooner did the notoriety of this midland beauty drifted into the ears of King Bimbisāra, than he came post-haste to Ujjaini to gain a carnal knowledge of her. Unfortunately for reasons of preoccupations with other duties of vital importance or more probably Padumavati having had no other acquirements to capture the heart of a fastidious king than her natural physical beauty, the king could not spend more than one night with her.

Whether this estimable noble had really the capacity possessed by many sexual athletes of impregnating women with astounding celerity or he used to be befooled by the ingenious women who wanted just to enhance their professional prestige by being designated the mothers of so-called princes and with this to extract in the near future the maximum bounty out of him, unfortunately for us, history has overlooked to record. Bimbisāra brought on within the short span of seven days a conception on Ambapālī,—an affair which is rather a probability; but as if by way of outstripping this achievement, to produce another on Padumavati in course of a night, specially on a soil habitually sterile, is something to be swallowed with a grain of salt. Any way she announced on the following morning that the king had impregnated her verily at his first encounter, and Bimbisāra always proud of his remarkable virility, found no reasons to disbelieve her story. "If it be a son, let me see him when he is grown up" he said to the woman; then he gave her a signet and left for his capital.

In due course a son was born and was named Abhaya (the second). When Abhaya was seven years old, he was sent to Rājgir to see his royal father, who lovingly took him in and allowed him to grow up along with the boys of the court. The

boy had a religious inclination and afterwards embraced Buddhism. Padumavati was persuaded by her son to relinquish her wretched ways of life and pass the rest of her days in the blissful solitude of a Buddhist cloister\*.

The incidents of the life of Padumavati of Ujjaini and Ambapāli of Vaisali bear a striking analogy to each other on many points. Both had issues by the king and both sons were named Abhaya. Yet there is no strong ground in history to make us believe that both were one and the same person†.

As we have said before, the prosperity of Vaisāli was greatly due to the existence and opulence of Ambapāli; and the people of Rājagriha with a view to bring upon their city a similar prosperity had a noted courtesan domiciled there with the active assistance of a merchant. Sālavati as she was named was an exquisitely beautiful girl, with a most handsome face, a graceful figure and a pleasant temperament. She was equally accomplished in dancing, singing and lute-playing, and was naturally visited by many people of fashion. Her fee was double that of Ambapāli i. e. 100 *kaḥāpanas* for a few fleeting hours of the night. Unfortunately in the beginning of her promising career, she became pregnant. She well knew that pregnant courtesans are disliked by their patrons. She, therefore, refused to entertain anybody during this period on pretext of illness. In due course Sālavati brought forth a child which was clandestinely thrown into a street dust-bin.

Prince Abhaya with his attendants was passing by that way early in the following morning to attend upon the king. He fell across the cast-away baby benumbed by cold and surrounded by a flock of fluttering crows. One of his attendants picked up and looked into the child to find it still alive. By the order of the prince it was brought to the palace and was nourished by the nurses of the royal household. The foundling was named "Jivaka" as he had been picked up alive and was also surnamed "Komarabhacca" as he had been caused to be nourished by the prince. This Jivaka Komarabhacca became

\* *Therīgatha Commentary* pp. 39-40.

† *Women in Buddhist Literature* by B. C. Law Ph.D., M.A., B.L., p. 29.



renowned as the greatest medical authority of his time\* and is known to have been the Lord Buddha's attending physician. His life gives out a glaring instance of the prostitute's proverbial dislike for boy-babies many of whom were either killed or cast off immediately after their birth, though the female child was hailed as a boon and nurtured most carefully. Sālavati who so brutally forsook Jivaka, anxiously reared her daughter Sirimā, who afterwards like her mother, became a very noted courtesan of Rājagriha. It is easy to find out the reason why daughters were raised and brought up so carefully. It is through a daughter that their professional traditions were maintained and the grubs of their old age gathered. The son had generally been found to be ashamed of his lowly birth and have learnt to hate his meretricious mother, and as such, either he disavowed his succession or squandered away her ill-gotten properties in some good or bad cause. So it is to the daughter that a bequest was made by the rich strumpets in absolute confidence.

Sirimā, the daughter of Sālavati was a girl of unique beauty and marvellous talents. When she made her professional debut at Rājagriha, people from all quarters began to rush in to her house with their plump purses. She used to keep a very large establishment with 500 *ganikas* of varying worth principally to entertain the friends of her paramours. Once Sirimā was appointed for a fortnight by a lady called Uttarā for the entertainment of her husband, Sumana. She was the daughter of Punnaka, a treasurer in the employment of a very rich banker at Rājagriha. Her husband, father-in-law and mother-in-law were false believers (probably Hindus) and she could get no opportunity of making offerings to the Buddha's Apostles or to join a Buddhist Mass. She informed her father of her difficulty. Punnaka sent over to her a large sum of money to tide it over with. Uttarā gave a good portion of this money to her weak-minded husband and a carte-blanche to enjoy the company of Sirimā for a fortnight, so that she might be free to offer charity to the Lord Buddha and his disciples and listen to their precious sermons.

Sirimā had been engaged by Uttarā for one thousand

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\* *Vinaya Text* II, pp. 172-174.

*kahapanas* per night to minister unto her husband\*. One day Sirimā in some way or other offended against Uttarā and afterwards begged her pardon. She said, she would accept her apology only if she could win the grace of her Exalted Lord. A few days after, the Buddha with his concourse of monks came to Uttarā's house and held a religious discourse. Uttarā listened to it and attained the second stage of Sanctification. Sirimā had also come there to beg his pardon as desired by Uttarā and heard his sermon along with her 500 underlings in a spirit of devotion. After this, she attained the first stage of Sanctification and sent alms to eight leading monks†. The *Vimānavatthu Commentary* says that Sirimā in the mean time fell suddenly ill and died a premature death just after her pious offerings were kindly accepted by the Bhikkhus.

The *Dhammapada Commentary* asserts that Sirimā's dead body was not cremated. As soon as she was dead, King Bimbisāra who had cherished a great affection for her and probably knew her mother intimately in her youthful days, informed the Buddha of her death. The Buddha requested the king not to burn up her body but to preserve it, so that it could serve as a practical lesson on the ephemerality of physical charms to the Bhikkhus and the Buddhist converts. The body was accordingly kept in a charnel-house (*amakasusanam*) and watched day and night by the royal guards against its being devoured by dogs, jackals and vultures. According to the dispensation of the Holy Master, the Bhikkhus and all the citizens were compelled to have a look into the decomposing body everyday; and any body who declined was fined eight pieces of silver by the order of the king. The Buddha's object was to effect by this demonstration a lasting impression on the minds of his followers that after all the most beautiful body decays leaving only a pack of bones behind and even the most exquisite beauty is only but skin-deep ‡. But it is aught but plausible that the Bhikkhus who had been constantly listening to the learned philosophy of

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\* *Dhammapada Commentary* III, pp. 308—309.

† *Ibid*, p. 104.

‡ *Dhammapada Commentary* III, 106-109.

the Buddha and had his exemplary life of renunciation before their very eyes, had yet to be exposed to such a disgustingly crude kindergarten system to learn the transitoriness of human beauty ! If the very sight of the old moribund women who had once been beautiful and the audience of Gautama Buddha's frequent tirades against all material acquisitions and sensual pleasures with his convincing sermons on the attainment of perfection, did not produce the desired effect on the minds of the Buddhist monks, it is very doubtful whether the desecration of a dead body in the way described above could achieve its end.

Vimalā was born at Vaisali in a public brothel, her mother being a prostitute of the city. When grown up, she stepped into the shoes of her mother and became an object of adulation to the rich cockneys of the town. Vimalā knew how to earn and how to spend, and was a most capricious lover. She sometimes ignored a rich and adored a pauper, her greatest hobby of life being to spare no means to angle the innocent and the austere. When sufficiently advanced in age, she saw one day from the roof of her house the venerable Mahāmoggallāna trudging about in the street for alms. She at once took up with this resplendent missionary and next day went to his cottage to offer him her tarnished love. She left no stone unturned to soften his heart, but to no purpose. Mahāmoggallāna, on the contrary, expostulated with her. This was most likely her first discomfiture in life ; and tears of compunction welled up in her eyes when she heard him discourse on the purity tenet of Buddhism. She immediately became a believer and a lay sister. Vimalā in her old age took the monastic vows and by dint of her valuable services to the cause of the religion attained *Arhatship*\*.

Benares was from the tenth century B. C. a prosperous capital of Kāshi on the banks of the river Gangā, famous for its rich array of idols and emporium of all sorts of merchandise, prostitutes being one of its chief attractions. Several centuries later it became one of the biggest centres of Sanskrit learning and held a common platform on which all religions could

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\* *Therigatha Commentary*, 76-77.

amicably meet. This city from the day of its foundation had been teeming with trollops and courtezans who had flocked there from all parts of the country to earn a decent competence. None came to starve here, as customers were (as they still are) plenty ; and one could find here all grades of beauty representing every religion, caste, race or language of India and could enjoy them in lieu of a king's treasury to a few king's coins. Chroniclers in those days were but few and far between, and writers who would care to record the life history of the leading courtezans of their time were still more scarce. Yet Buddhist Scriptures and Commentaries have left us enough materials appertaining to them, incidentally or adventitiously, to enable us to make a fair estimate of these fair dealers in debauchery.

Thus we come across one of the most noted courtezans of Benares in the *Vinaya Texts* (III, pp. 360-61). She was born in the family of a very influential banker of the city. Her father was a distinguished citizen and thoroughly *au courant* in fashion and learning. He brought up his daughter with the utmost care possible and made her conversant with the *belles lettres* of his time. Notwithstanding all, she adopted the career of a courtesan and fixed for her nightly favours a most prohibitive price that was equal to a day's revenue of the King of Kāshi. Consequently the number of men who could step over her threshold was ridiculously small till she was obliged to reduce her fees to half. This gave the occasion for adorning her with the epithet of "*Ardhakāshi*" by which she has ever after been known. She did not remain unaffected by the tide of nascent Buddhism, and one day prepared to start for Sāvasthi ( Srāvasti ) where the Lord Buddha was then sojourning. She had dedicated her vast wealth to various charitable causes and also took with her a large sum of money to place at the holy feet of the Blessed Lord. But on the eve of her departure she came to know that a band of ruffians had been lying in ambush for her. So being unable to proceed, she sent a trusted messenger to Gautama Buddha to speak on her behalf. The Buddha sent a most learned and competent Bhikkhu to confer on her the *Upasampada* ordi-

nation. Ardhakāshi was thus initiated by proxy. She then strove hard to attain "self-realisation" and "auto-purification". Before long, she is said to have obtained *Arhatship*\*. She possessed a wonderful merit for poetry ; some of her poems have come down to us—most perfect in rhymes and dignified with an ethical tone.

Courtesan Sāmā lived in a palatial building at the holy city of Benares. Her fee amounted to a thousand pieces of silver per night. She was patronised by the kings, the nobles and the rich merchants, and had a suite of five hundred slave-girls. She was the cause of the death of a young wealthy merchant who was madly enamoured of her and who used to pay her standard fees every night with alacrity. One day while standing at an open window on the upper floor of her house, she saw a robber, exceedingly handsome in appearance, being led along the street by the police constables. She fell in love with this criminal at the very first sight and longed to have him as her pet paramour. She bought the release of the robber by sending a gratuity of one thousand pieces of gold coins to the governor of the city with the information that the robber was her only brother whom she could ill afford to leave her side. Sāmā most cruelly despatched her merchant lover and thenceforth accepted nothing from any man's hand, but passed night and day in frenzied ecstasy with that churlish robber in her couch. The latter thought that if this fanciful woman fell in love with any body else, she would either chuck him up or bring about his death. So he resolved to make hay while the sun shone ; and one day on some pretext or other, he took her along with all her valuable jewellery on to a lonely garden, squeezed her throat till she lost consciousness and then decamped with everything he could lay his hands upon. When Sāmā recovered her senses, she could not find her insincere bully. She fasted for a few days and prayed for the return of her gallant in spite of his cruelty. The robber, of course, never returned, and she took once more to her former course of life\*.

In Benares, there lived yet another beautiful woman of the

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\* Cowell, *The Jatakas*, III., 40-42.

## History of Prostitution in India, Vol. I



No favour from a courtesan without payment.

A Jātaka-scene from Bodhgayā railing.



A Drooping Lotus.  
( A fragment from Sarnath )



town named Sulasā. The first part of her life-story in many respect tallies with that of the courtesan Sāmā. She too had a train of five hundred youthful auxiliaries and the amount of her fees was exactly as that of Sāmā. One day while she was standing near a window and looking down on the street, her eyes fell upon a murderous robber named Sattuka who was at that time being dragged along to the place of execution with his hands fettered behind his back. Sulasā at once took a fancy to him and thought, "If I could ransom that brave and handsome young man, I would once for all give up this mode of life and ever after live respectably with him." With all but the whole of her life's earnings she bribed the police commissioner of the city and effected the freedom of the robber, who became her exclusive paramour thereafter.

The robber whose appetite after three or four months reached to a point of surfeit desired to abandon the good-willed girl for good, but not with an empty hand. To carry out his sinister purpose, the robber one day told her that while being hauled along by the king's men to the place of execution, he had promised an oblation to an arboreal diety on the top of a neighbouring mountain in case he was saved. Sulasā to fulfil his lover's desire put on all her ornaments and accompanied him to the top of the precipitous mountain with all the requisites of an offering. On reaching the edge of a cliff, the diabolical lover divulged to her that she had been brought there to be murdered and relieved of all her jewellery.

She said in imploring terms, "Well, dear, why do you intend to kill me? I sacrificed a rich man's patronage for you and spent a fabulous sum to save your life. As long as we have been living like man and wife, I have left no desire of yours unfulfilled, and gave you everything that my body and means are capable of. I could earn a thousand silver coins per night all these days, but did not only for your sake. I am nothing but your well-wisher and benefactress. Would you not be considerate enough to spare my life?" The robber did not pay any heed to it and told her repeatedly that he would presently kill her. Then all of a sudden, Sulasā's wits rose to the height



of the occasion. She asked for the last embrace of Sattuka, the man whom she had loved so much. Her prayer was granted. She walked round him in respectful salutation three times and kissed him with affected fervency. Then she suddenly darted behind, gave him a desperate push which sent him down the precipice, crushing him instantaneously to death\*.

It is not definitely known whether Śāmā and Sulasā embraced Buddhism and joined the monastic order ; but in the Buddha's life-time and after his death there were thousand others who suddenly awoke into a consciousness of their degraded life and whose eyes were opened to the light of heavenly purity. Many abject souls were filled with bitterness and remorse ; many were converted into this new faith that led to an abjuration of their vicious life. Buddhism like Christianity brought about a regenerative and consoling effect on all the tortured souls ; and from its very inception it aimed at debasing the proud and elevating the humble. So the sermons of the Buddha and his evangelists first touched the tender chords of the proletariat heart which found relief in ridding itself of the obligations to an age-worn religion burdened with exacting rites and rituals. The prostitutes were the most ardent in responding to the clarion call of Buddhism which went first unheeded and then was almost dreaded by the Hindu priestcraft.

The life-histories of Ambapālī and Ardhakāshi not only show that India could boast like ancient Greece of possessing a class of the most accomplished hetairæ who were poets, philosopheresses, commentators and wits, but bear some resemblance to the legendary records of some of the famous courtezans touched by the hand of Lord Christ and his apostles. Like Buddhist *Arhatship*, some of them attained absolution ; and some became martyrs and were turned into saints. In passing, we would like to acquaint ourselves with one or two of such rehabilitated souls of the early Christian Era but for the sake of a comparative study.

There lived in a prosperous city of Egypt a reputed courtesan named Thais. Her flaming beauty attracted many flies from all quarters of the country and across the sea ; and many rich

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\* Cowell, *The Jatakas* III, 260-163 ; cf. *Paramatthadīpani* on the Petavatthu, page 4,

profligates sold all they were in possession of to purchase a jot of her wanton favour. Her threshold is said to have been always soaked in the blood of her reprehensible customers who often fell into jealous feuds amongst themselves. Abbot Paphnucus hit upon a plan to convert this inveterate harlot. He put on a secular dress and visited her one night with a few pieces of gold coins. Fortunately Thais had not a very roaring business that night ; so she accepted his money and led him into her well-furnished sleeping room. When invited to her bed to receive the merchandise of pleasure, Paphnucus asked her, "Can we not possibly retire to a more secret place?" She led him in succession to a set of equally furnished rooms in the inner side of her palacial residence and each time he interrogated, "Could you not take me into a more private room? I fear to be seen here too". At the end of her resources, Thais with a dejected look replied, "Well, my man, if it is God you are afraid of, I think, there is no place hidden from his sight."

The old abbot was astonished at this intelligent retort ; wanting now to take her at her word he said, "Then since you know that there *is* God, why have you been incurring the displeasure of Him by causing the perdition of so many souls? Do you not know that after your death you will have to render an account of your innumerable acts of sin here?" Thais at once fell at Paphnucus' feet, contrite and remorseful, and cried, "O Father, I am gone. How could I obtain an absolution of my sins?" "Only by long penitence and prayer," the holy man assured. After this, Thais collected all her belongings—costly costumes, rare jewels, superb array of furniture, and consigned everything to the flames blazed for the purpose in a public square before the amazing eyes of the public. At the instance of Paphnucus, she entered a convent of virgins and shut herself up in a dingy cell for three years to follow the course of her penance. Her sins are said to have all been remitted and "she died like a virgin". Anatole France has drawn inspiration from this very story contained in the "*Lives of the Fathers*" in writing his famous novel "Thais".

There was yet another famous prostitute in the town of Alexandria during the reign of Claudius. Her name was Mary. In her twelfth year she was brought to Alexandria and was initiated into the life of a strumpet. Her fame soon travelled far beyond the city. She seldom lost any fish off the hook, and gladly entertained all men that crossed her door-sill with her proper fees in their pockets. She practised her trade in this manner for seventeen years till she came under the congenial influence of Christianity and abjured her abject life of lechery. She made a wholesale charity of all her acquisitions and wore the robes of a self-abnegated nun. When a company of converts was sailing for Jerusalem to adore the Holy Cross, she readily joined it. But when the mariners demanded the fare of her, she begged them, "Brothers, I have nothing to give, but take my body in payment of my passage". The mariners throughout the voyage took perhaps more than what was due by enjoying her still admirable body. On reaching Jerusalem she made a vow of chastity and placed herself under the guidance of Virgin Mary. She crossed the River Jordan and lost herself in the outlying desert where she remained forty-seven years in penance and mortification. At the fag-end of her sequestered life, she admitted to Abbot Zosimus, "During the first seventeen years of my desert life, I had to suffer the temptations of the flesh ; but by the grace of God (about the age of forty-six) I could vanquish them all\*".

The pagan persecution of the Christian proselytes for over three centuries after the Redeemer stands out in bold relief for its remarkable severity, horror and obduracy. The Brāhmins were very little inclined to this, specially if a Shūdra or a prostitute was concerned, though social ex-communication and mild persecution in a surreptitious way were commonly resorted to by them. The pagan judges were always merciless to the prostitute who renounced their old faith and vile profession. Many such prostitutes were sent to the prison, the gallows or the flames, otherwise sentenced to be outraged by the government guards as well as the public at their sweet pleasure. They

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\* *History of Prostitution*—Paul Lecroix ( Putnam's translation ), p. 529.

have since then been crowned with the precious appellation of "Saint."

Afra was a whore who embraced Christianity with a party of her friends in the profession and thereby incited the wrath of the local administration. She was hauled up before Judge Gaius who at first received her smilingly and tried to persuade her to return to her old faith and occupation. Afra was inexorable. The Judge resumed, "I say, Afra, sacrifice unto our gods so that they may grant you a better fortune and a deeper love of your customers. Sacrifice so that your lovers may bring you much silver". Afra blushing replied, "I shall never accept that accursed silver as I have gained a golden conscience. I have rid myself of my ill-gained riches. Christ is now my God." Then Gaius ordered her to be burned alive. Afra walked to the ground of her grim fate with a firm step and died with a firmer faith in her redemption.

Tolerance of the holy fathers towards all women of weak character was a lesson they learnt from the very life of Jesus who seemed rather to pity their weakness than sustain an abhorrence for it. This all-loving Master drank water from the hands of a Samaritan woman who had five husbands and a paramour into the bargain. He accepted with an angelic innocence the offerings of Mary Magdalen who maintained her relations with seven libertines. Under the reproachful glance of the Pharisees, she received the holy benediction of the divine Redeemer who said in deep compassion, "Thy sins which are many are forgiven thee, because thou hast loved too much". Neither Buddha nor Jesus, notwithstanding their indulgence to these wretched creatures, did cherish any intention of encouraging the sinner to continue her old habits and take her into his holy coterie unless he observed a sign of atonement. Both of them wanted to sublimate the love-impulse and to metamorphose it from the sensual to the spiritual—from the physical to the metaphysical—from the personal to the universal.

But while Jesus depended on love alone, Buddha, his predecessor, had added a most dependable chaperon to it, namely "Knowledge."

## CHAPTER VIII.

### THE JATAKAS AND THE NUNNERY.

Gautama Buddha's doctrine attracted a large number of women of all classes, chaste, unchaste, rich, poor, married and unmarried, who joined his order to lead a pious life in expectation of a happy rebirth or in the hope of a total exemption from rebirth and annihilation altogether (*Nirvāna*). We have already dwelt on the lives of a small number of coutezans who so dramatically turned over a new leaf after they had come in touch with the Buddha and his hallowed teachings. It seems rather paradoxical that the Buddha and the apostles who were never tired of harping on the wiles of women should not only have intimately mixed with the courtezans, but have eaten their food, lived at their abode, accepted their contributions, read them sermons and finally converted them to his faith, thus proving in spite of themselves that these women were not so black as they had been painted. The reason of his taking particular pains to convert these women probably lies in the fact that they exerted immense influence not only with the kings and nobles but also with the mass, and that the conversion of the mistress of an establishment with several hundred *ganikas* affected as well as created a very favourable impression on the minds of a large number of people. It was undoubtedly a nice plan for any preacher bent on popularising his doctrines to have turned his whole heart in the conversion of these women of

the town who, according to the *Jātakas*, "had no place in the respectable household and were only reserved for the pleasures of the people."

Now what are these "Jātakas"? By the *Jātakas* we generally mean the birth-stories of the historical Buddha, of the anecdotes of his present and his past lives. By the beginning of the fifth century A. D. the total anecdotes of the past came to be fixed as 550, though in the earlier reckoning it was less by 50. A complete translation of the *Jātakas* initiated by the late Prof. Cowell, and executed by Dr. W. H. D. Rouse and other scholars has been published in England from Cambridge (1895-1907). The *Jātaka Commentary* edited by Fausboll was nothing but a somewhat later version of a earlier work in Singhalese and Pāli. The *Commentary* collection of the birth-stories in prose which interspersed with texts quoted in verse and rarely in prose, appears to have been well-known in India and Ceylon in the fifth century A. D.\*. The date of the growing collection may indeed be pushed back to the second century A. D. when the great inner railing of the "Stupa" at Bārhut was constructed with numerous sculptures representing a great many of these stories in detail. The beginning of a few birth-stories in prose can be traced in the early portions of the Pāli Canon, and many Sanskrit counterparts of the Canonical texts in verse can be traced almost verbatim in some of the anecdotes of the great Epic, of which the earlier version is clearly presupposed by the treatise of Pānini and the *Grihyasutras*. Some of the birth-stories in their purely secular garb may be traced in the *Panchatantra* and *Hitopadesa*. These *Jātakas* found their way into a new Sanskrit Buddhist literature that developed under the name of *Abadāna* or book or books of edifying legends. Thus we may take the Buddhist *Jātakas* and earlier *Abadānas* as a piece of extensive folk-literature that throws abundant side-light on the social, religious, moral, economic and political history of India from about 6th or 7th century B. C. to about the 4th or 5th century A. D. The literature as a whole bears evidence of the development of the socio-moral and socio-economic life of ancient India

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\* Rhys Davids—*Buddhist India*, pp. 189-209,

which was greatly possible during the period that comes within the scope of the present chapter.

The picture as drawn by the *Jatakas* represents that the prostitutes had almost lost all the inborn feminine qualities and led an incredibly abominable life, earning their bread and butter by hiring out their comely bodies. It is said that they "counted men whom they utterly disliked in the same way as the man whom they adored\*." Of course, in the trade a prostitute could not do otherwise. The rich men who walked into their snare were consumed "like fuel cast in a blazing fire". The worst trait of their character is embodied in the assertion that they even murdered an innocent lover just to curry the favour of or to satisfy their incorrigible lust with, some body else, perhaps the man who promised them more intensive pleasure or handsome remuneration†. These public women tried to attract men every evening by the display of their embonpoint figure, sweet songs and seductive eyes ; and where these failed to produce any effect they assumed different poses so as to impishly expose such parts of their charming body as could put the most strong-minded puritan out of his head and lure him into their delusive den. As has already been said, even these shameless creatures attained saintly character in contact with the high ideals of Buddhism and were held in not a little esteem by all decorous people of the time.

The *Jatakas* did not stop here. They are full of diatribes not only against the courtezans and drabs but against all women of the world. They have found out forty ways by which a woman (other than a prostitute) can give hints of her inclination towards a man. She displays extraordinary activity, stoops down, frisks and skips lightly or looks flushed. She presses her finger-tips together, places one foot on the other or scratches the ground with something like a rod or stick. She dandles her baby up and down (in a see-saw motion), plays with her child like a child, kisses him over and over or makes him kiss her likewise etc. She speaks sometimes in a high and at other moments in a

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\* Cowell—*The Jatakas* V, p. 242.

† *Op. cit.*, III, p. 40.

very low whispering voice ; lips incoherently one time and speaks quite distinctly at another. She tries to attract her man with dance, song and music or appeals with tears. Sometimes too she attempts to draw the attention of the object of her desire with jewels and fineries. She laughs, stares, shrivels her dress or ruffles her loin-cloth. Intentionally she exposes her legs and when detected at once covers herself up with an affected bashfulness. Sometimes she lays bare her bosom, her armpit or her navel. She languidly closes her eyes, raises her eyebrows, bites her lips or tongue which again she sometimes lolls out as if to kiss the air. She alternately loosens or tightens the loin-tie of her cloth and moves her head-dress to and fro and so on\*.

The *Kunala Jātaka V.* (pp. 434-35) gives a description of 25 different symptoms by which a dissatisfied wife or a clandestine prostitute can be determined by her husband's relatives or the neighbours. A few of the characteristic signs are given below :—

She praises her husband's absence from home, and is not pleased at his return. She seeks opportunity to speak ill of him and is never eloquent in his praise. She retires to bed with her full raiments on and lies with her face turned away from him. She changes her sides by fits, makes a great ado about nothing, heaves long-drawn sighs at frequent intervals, and has to solicit nature repeatedly during the night. She damages or wastes her husband's goods, forms an intimacy with her neighbours and slips away frequently from the house on some pretext or other, etc. etc.

There are scores of instances in the *Jātakas* of misconduct, adultery and clandestine cohabitation. *Fausboll Jātakas V.* (p. 439) describes how a bride while being carried in a closed carriage and accompanied by a large escort, misconducted herself with King Kāndari of Benares who was kept concealed by his resourceful minister in a tent-shaped screen. The *Bandhana-mokkha Jātakas* (No. 120) tells us that a queen wrested a promise from her husband that he would never look at any other women with lustful eyes, though she herself used to abandon herself to the most unfettered licentiousness during the absence

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\* Fausboll, *The Jātakas V.* pp. 433—434.



of the king who had often to go out in battle or on official tour. She cohabited with all the sixty-four messengers who were sent out to her by the king to enquire about her health and happiness and also to inform her of his whereabouts. Kinnarā, the Chief Queen of Benares went to the length of misconducting herself with a "loathsome cripple" (*The Jātakas V*, 37-38).

The *Avadāna Kalpalatā* furnishes us with the most abominably tragic story of Kāmakaḷā, wife of Chandandatta, a rich merchant of Ujjaini. She became very concupiscent when her husband had gone abroad for commercial purposes. She almost decided to go out in search of an amorous adventure and thereby satisfy her passion to her heart's content. But one of her maids-of-honour advised her to remain in the palace and better satisfy her desires in a safely surreptitious manner. She quietly brought in a man at night and introduced him to Kāmakaḷā in a dark room to avoid recognition of the adventurers to each other. She abandoned herself to the embraces of this stranger without very little prelude. After a few days' clandestine union, she found out that she had all these days been cohabiting with her own son Asvadanda! Both of them had crossed the Rubicon, and it was now too late to rectify the mistake. Nevertheless, a tragic affair like this which even the most puissant dramatist would never like to weave out further, and on which he would most likely have dropped the curtain, was by this diabolical pair drawn out into a frightful comedy. Their loathsome relationship continued even after the return of Chandandatta. One day Kāmakaḷā advised her son to put his father to death, which this wretched beast did, and lived almost openly with his mother as man and wife for a few years. But Kāmakaḷā's condemnable career did not end here. She was charmed with the naive beauty of a merchant's son named Sundara and had illicit connection with him. Her son found it out and killed her without compunction.

The misconduct of Queen Pingiyāni with a groom of the royal stable is another instance of the taste of the fornicatrices in high life\*. The wife of King Tissa of Kalyāṇī is said to have

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\* *The Jātakas V*, p. 444.

been in intrigue with her husband's younger brother named Ayya-uttika. Anulā, another infamous queen fell in love successively with a palace guard, a city carpenter, a wood-carrier and finally the royal priest. She doled out her favours to each of them for a time and then murdered them one after the other with deadly poison (*Op. cit.*, p. 279). Panchapāpā who was so well-known for her ravishing grace became the queen of two friendly kings who enjoyed her company by turns. She used to live with one for a week when the king would do full justice to his share. She would then cross over in a barge to the palace of the other to yield him the same pleasure for the next seven days. During the short voyage, Panchapāpā could not sit idle. When in midstream, she would abandon herself to the most unworthy caresses of a lame and bald old man on board who steered the boat\*.

Clandestine affair seems to have been so much in vogue at the time that decent men were advised to avoid five kinds of women ; such as—(1) a remarkably clever woman, (2) a beautiful woman, (3) a neighbour's wife, (4) a woman admired by many men, and (5) a woman who seeks a rich man for a mate†. Moreover people have been directed not to mix with any women in highways, in big (crowded) halls, in cities and in small towns. A woman was blamed if she frequented public parks, private gardens, river banks and houses of relatives. Infamy overtook her if she visited the apartments of a stranger and loved to dress herself in tight-fitting jackets of fine texture so as to expose the rounded lines of her beautiful breasts, to drink wine, to stare at the passers-by and to stand before her door or windows‡. A weak-kneed woman is said to despise her husband on eight grounds ; viz, if the husband is poor, habitually sick or prematurely old ; if he is an incorrigible drunkard, reckless or unaccommodating ; if he is dull and always in bad temper due to overwork or worries of business §. These wives, according to the *Jatakas*, are never

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\* Fausboll, *The Jatakas* Vol. V., page 446.

† *Ibid*, p. 433.

‡ *Ibid*, p. 448.

§ *Kunala Jataka*, Fausboll, p. 536.

satisfied with their lot and always hover about to taste "the fruits of the forbidden tree". She can in no wise be trusted even if she has borne 10 children. In fact, if given opportunities and secrecy of the whole affair is visibly assured, every woman is liable to fall from her virtuous path, as the proverb goes—"oceans, kings, Brāhmins and women are the four eternal insatiates\*."

The Buddhist literature draws, of course, both sides of the female character, though unfortunately the black brush is flourished with much more enthusiasm than the white one, and with a vengeance, as it were. We have reproduced above some of the horribly overdrawn pictures of woman's so-called inborn nature as have found place in the Buddhist holy books ; but this should not warrant the inference that female chastity was rare in those days. On the contrary, modesty of women had become already an well-founded system and the ladies of the household attained a position probably better than the Roman matrons, though the extent of their freedom was being much narrowed down. If the stories regarding female frailty as found in the *Jātakas* are to be taken as true without making even the slightest allowances, they will but serve to set up some outstanding exceptions by way of proving the general rule. Severe punishments which included imprisonment, mutilation, cleaving asunder and decapitation, were inflicted on women for violation of the vows of chastity. The husband could with impunity kill her wife, if she were found to have gone back upon her marriage vows. But curiously enough the wife was seldom divorced on the ground of adultery, though divorce-law was not unknown in those days.

The men while demanding the sternest monogamic purity of women and holding out severe penalties for the slightest infringement, gave free reins to their polygamous instinct. The statute books and social laws always took a lenient view of the man's immorality, more so if he belonged to the high castes and possessed money and influence. It was for these classes that women's monogamic instinct was often made to suffer and it was for their pleasure that her avowed chastity was sometimes

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\* Fausboll, *The Jātakas* V, p. 440.

brought to the altar of immolation. For obvious reasons, feminine modesty was made as brittle as a glass, so that it could remain "once broken always broken." One is not to go to great lengths to prove that in most of the cases men act the aggressor and women become unchaste through their machinations. It has been, and still is, the case in India as well as in other parts of the world. We have already had a peep into the harems of the aristocracy abounding in swarms of *ganikas* and concubines. Some of the ruling chiefs had, in addition to a host of wives and concubines, as many as 16,000 dancing girls in their service.

The evident incongruity in sexual temperament and inequity in the laws of morality gradually gave rise to a set of discontented women who wanted to renounce the world, not so much for the sake of religion itself, as to escape from the inevitable sufferings of an unhappy union or the social prejudices. Of course, the altruistic and solacing tone of the Buddha also wielded a great attraction and impelled a large number to join the monastic order. Many a bereaved mother, childless widow and penitent harlot rushed in for it to get relief from their woes and agonies. Not a small number of girls came under the soothing shade of this religion to avoid the scorching humiliation of being sold by their fathers to the most unsuitable suitors at the highest bid. The intelligent women also, to emancipate themselves from the restraints of conventional tradition on their cultural development, took to convent life. The wife of rich men realised that pleasures did not lie in the idle, lonely life of luxury, nor in being but a living adornment of the household only to be coddled or neglected by the whims of her husband who was in possession of more than one wife besides scores of concubines and dancing girls to satisfy him. Others also came there to escape from the increasing obligations of a domestic hearth and to taste the care-free novel life in a cloister. On the other hand, the plebian wife unable to bear up against the anxieties of an impoverished household often followed her rich sister.

The ladies of the Sākya family were naturally the first to imbibe the influence of the doctrines of the Buddha. According

to all Buddhistic accounts, the credit of forming the first institute of the order of nuns goes to Mahāpajāpati Gotamī, the foster-mother of the Buddha and to five hundred Sākya ladies. Mahāpajāpati Gotamī was the first lady to go through a tonsure and put on the yellow robes of the Order. The Buddha was staying at Kapilavatthu (Kapilavastu) at the time when his old foster-mother came to seek his approval to join the Holy Order and to crystallise the idea of a sisterhood so long unknown in Hindu India. He declined to allow any woman to enter into "the homeless life"; but her eagerness and sincerity coupled with the strong recommendation of Ānanda, his favourite disciple, proved too much for him; though he was against effecting a drastic change in the established order of society of his time, he had to yield in the long run. Thus was formed the nucleus of the *Bhikkhuni Samgha* (Buddhist nunnery), Māhāpajapati Gotamī being the first fortunate lady to receive ordination at the hands of the Holy Redeemer. But prior to the initiation, eight fundamental rules for the sisterhood were constituted by the Buddha. Every woman who joined the Order had thenceforth to follow these rules to the letters. After Gotamī, the 500 Sākya ladies who accompanied her, were also initiated. Then came some members of the Buddha's own harem—Tissā, Dhirā, Mittā, Bhaddā, Upasamā and others\*. In course of time the *Bhikkhuni Samgha* became well-established and rapidly multiplied in number throughout the length and breadth of this vast country.

Women in thousands began to join the Order; and once they became "Bhikkhunis", they went beyond the pale of law and could not be subjected to any secular punishment for an offence committed before entering the Order. In course of time, the nunnery became the last refuge of a heterogenous group of criminals who joined it not out of any religious sentiments but only to escape from the clutches of law. Once a Lichchhavi wife, when in the act of committing adultery with somebody, was found out by her husband, who in a fit of rage resolved to kill her then and there. No sooner did she understand this, than she ran for her life like a hare to Savatthi and succeeded in getting herself forthwith

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\* *Therigatha Commentary*, pp. 12-13.

initiated by a Bhikkhuni. Her husband also, hotly pursuing her, came to Sāvatti, only to find that she had already been taken into the *Bhikkhuni Samgha*. He complained to the king Pasenadi of Kosala, and explained to him how the adulterous wife was avoiding a justified punishment by this trickery. The king dismissed his case with the remark that once a woman became a Bhikkhuni, even a king had no power to inflict any punishment on her for any offence committed previous to her entering the Order\*, as it would then amount to the worst form of sacrilege.

In course of time, it became extensively known throughout the Buddhist kingdoms that an adulterous woman could save her skin by entering the Buddhist Order of nuns, which gave an incentive to a large number of women of loose morals to take full advantage of this usage†. Naturally, the "Eight Laws" first formulated by the Buddha were thought insufficient to cope with this new situation which necessitated in the near future the promulgation of a set of fresh regulations for a more effective control of this curious medley of nuns. The eight primary laws had been formulated by the Buddha to prevent any germ of immorality growing amongst the Bhikkhus and the Bhikkhunis, and also to make it impossible at any time for the latter to rule over the former. The first rule was that a Bhikkhuni, even if she were 100 years old, must always pay her respects to a young Bhikkhu. Gautama had flatly refused to listen to the prayers of his influential lieutenant, Ānanda, who had then in view Mahāpajapati Gotamī and other elderly ladies of the Lord's family, that monks and nuns should pay respects unto each other according to the seniority in their ascetic life or of age.

If fact, the Buddha wanted to keep the nuns under perpetual subjugation of the monks. His next move was towards preventing the members of two sections from meeting and mixing together except on approved occasions. A form of Lent had been prescribed for both the monks and nuns, and after the expiry of the term of this religious observance every nun was required to make a clean confession of and ask pardon for, any sins of her either in thought,

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\* *Bhikkhuni Vibhanga Sanghdisesa* Vol. II, p. 225.

† *Vinaya Pitaka* Vol. IV, pp. 225-26.

deed or speech to a male confessionalist. The Bhikkhus were also prohibited from giving the cassock to a nun (except in case of a blood relation) for washing or delivering any sermon to a nun after sunset, or going to the abode of a nun except in case of her sickness or travelling in the company of a nun except in a caravan or on a ferry-boat just to cross the river. The nuns too were strictly prohibited to sit beside or talk with any man, monk or otherwise, in a covered room or in a dark place or on the meadows even in moon-light. None was allowed to be taken out alone in a public street by any man, or to associate herself under no circumstances with a house-holder or his grown-up son. She was also forbidden to sit in front of a lonely monk or enter his hermitage without his permission, and not even allowed to go out alone after dusk. The Bhikkhuni was particularly forbidden to touch the body of either a layman or a Bhikkhu with an amorous inclination\*. Besides these, she was neither allowed to attend nor take part in dancing, singing or playing of musical instruments. nor was she allowed the liberty to visit a palace, a royal garden, a picture-gallery, or the garden-house of a noble. She was, furthermore, not allowed to put on any sort of ornaments, take her bath in perfumed water or bathe naked either alone or with her "sisters". She could not lie on a soft couch or a valuable bedstead. Two Bhikkhunis were prohibited to use the same cot together or to cover themselves with the same bed-sheet.

In spite of all these steel-framed rules, worst forms of debauchery gradually crept into the Order. It is on record that *Chhabbaggiya* monks used to uncover different parts of their body and expose them to the curious gaze of the nuns with a view to kindle a desire in their mind†. Many were by these means alone lured into clandestine union with them. Once a harem lady came

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\* *Vinaya Pitaka* IV, pp. 220-221.

† "*Khabbaggiya* Bhikkhus threw dirty water over Bhikkhunis, thinking perhaps they would fall in love with them.

"Now at that time the *Khabbaggiya* Bhikkhus uncovered their bodies or their thighs, or their private parts, and showed them to Bhikkhunis or addressed Bhikkhunis with wicked words or associated with Bhikkhunis, thinking perhaps, they would fall in love with them."

—*Vinaya Texts*, Kullavagga 9, in S. B. E., p. 335.

and joined the order. She was familiar with all the perversities of harem-life and taught a nun how to satisfy the sexual desire by unnatural means. These two nuns used to lie together in the late hours of the night on a bed under the same cover and take delight in the practice of tribadism and mutual masturbation. In defiance of all prohibitory orders as also against all sense of decency, many nuns soon began to bathe naked; and some are known to have been in the habit of using depilatories to remove the pubic hair. Some of the Bhikkhunis who probably could not forget their previous life of luxury, used to have different parts of their body secretly massaged by young neophytes, and in some cases the latter were permitted free dalliance with the parts considered most sacred to all "holy virgins".

Clandestine cohabitation seemed atlast to be the order of the Holy Order; and even the wandering or free nuns in their advanced age began frequently to act as intermediaries between lay lovers. Of course, the nuns did not always take the initiative; they could fairly be adjudged as more sinned against than sinning. Often they were outraged in spite of themselves either by their former lovers (some of whom might have entered the Order), or by thieves, libertines and boatmen. It happened in the case of Uppalavannā. She was the daughter of a banker at Sāvatti. She was very beautiful and many princes and bankers' sons desired her as their wife. She however renounced this world and became a nun. Among the suitors had been a cousin of hers who could not give up the hope of possessing her even for a few moments inspite of her having become a nun. Uppalavannā went to a forest for meditation and this young enthusiast followed her there. One day during her short absence, he crept into her room and kept himself concealed under the bedstead. After coming back, she came to sleep as usual on her bed; and as soon as she was asleep, this daring lover of a cousin quietly disorbed her and fell eagerly to satisfying his long-cherished desire. It did but take a moment to start Uppalavannā up. She struggled hard to disengage herself; but he was too strong for her, and the mischief was done. She brought this matter through other Bhikkhunis to the notice of the Buddha who prohibited the nuns thenceforth from



living alone as recluses in the forests. He also advised all the nuns to carry arms with them in future to protect their honour.

No doubt the Bhikkhus and the Bhikkhunis were held in high esteem by the lay people, though in some cases the former presumed too much on this veneration. Once a Bhikkhu went to the house of a lay lady named Suppabhā and asked her for alms. She had nothing valuable to give except her body which she cheerfully offered for the gratification of the monk. Sometimes women of fashion invited stout Bhikkhus to yield them a variety of carnal pleasures; and the latter took advantage of the implication that since they were not nuns, sexual congress with them would not amount to a violation of the canon law. So they always took every such opportunity by the forelock.

In passing, we should not forget to mention that still there were not a small number of monks and nuns who could overcome with ease the most indomitable temptations of the flesh and observed the sanctity of the order on principle, and who made virtue neither a matter of temporary necessity nor a clap-trap expedient of hypocrisy. The Buddhist canonical books and legendary literature have preserved for us too many illustrations of this ecclesiastical morality to convince any one that this invulnerable integrity of a set of evangelists, if not of the whole community, went a long way to sustain the Buddha's doctrines successively for several centuries and to contribute much towards their gradual acceptance by one-third of the world's population.

Upagupta, one of the actual disciples of the Buddha, can be cited as one of such monks who commanded moral calibre of the highest order and adhered with all their life to the spiritual ideal of their religion. In the town of Mathurā, a courtesan named Vāsavadattā fell violently in love with this young Bhikkhu of singularly pleasing appearance. Once the woman sent her servant to him to declare her passion and invite him to her house. Within a short time the servant returned with the following enigmatic reply:—

"The time has not yet arrived when the disciple Upagupta can pay a visit to the courtesan Vāsavadattā".

This answer filled Vāsavadattā with no little astonishment.

She had been acclaimed as the most beautiful hetaira of the town, and the bewildering magnificence of her living excited the envy of the kings ; she was not accustomed to having her offers of love trampled upon in this way. Her vanity was hurt, though she could not admit defeat so easily. She reflected that the monk perhaps ignored her love on the score of his impecuniosity, so she sent her messenger again with the word, "Vāsavadattā desires love, not gold and pearls, as she has have them enough". By-and-by the servant returned with the same enigmatic answer as before : "The time is not yet come !"

A few months after this, Vāsavadattā had a love-intrigue with the head of the artisans of Mathura, and whilst this was in progress, an opulent merchant came to the city with 500 steeds to sell. Hearing of the costly beauty of Vāsavadattā, he contrived to pay her a visit and fell forthwith in love with her. His pearls and rich souvenirs were too much for the insatiable courtesan to overlook his attention, and necessarily she wanted to throw out the head of the artisans who had till then been monopolising her. She had him assassinated and his corpse buried in a dung-heap. The dead artisan's relatives alarmed at his sudden disappearance, caused a search to be made all around the courtesan's locality, in result of which the dead body was recovered. Vāsavadattā was arrested and brought before the court of justice. She was found guilty and sentenced to the mutilation of her bodies. A common executioner at once chopped off her hands, legs, nose, ears etc., and flung her body in a grave-yard. One of her faithful maids still clung to the mutilated body of her mistress in which, strangely enough, life was still flickering. The maid tried to assuage her unbearable pains and drove away the crows and vultures from besieging this bleeding and loathsome lump of flesh.

Just then the third and last message from Upagupta came to her of itself—"The time has at last arrived when the disciple Upagupta can pay a visit to the courtesan Vāsavadattā". The poor woman within whom, however, "the ashes of the wonted fires" were still hot, with a hurried impatience requested her maid to hide away the severed limbs—the useless remnants of her old

beauty, and to cover her impoverished trunk with a cloth as decently as possible. When Upagupta appeared, she said with a tone replete with remorseful petulance, "Alas! Once this body was fragrant like the lotus in full bloom; it was covered with rich pearls and fine muslin. Then I offered you my love and you did not deign to accept it. Now you have come to me that I am mangled and weltering in mud and blood!"

The young man sat by her side with a lustre of divine compassion in his eyes and an ocean of unfathomed comfort in his heart, and addressed Vāsavadattā gently, "Sister, it is neither for my own carnal pleasure nor for thine that I have come here to-day; take it that only a higher motive has drawn me towards you at this opportune moment". He then expounded the 'true nature' of the bodily charms, the loss of which she so much wailed and gave her a nice exposition on the beauty of the soul... "He then told her of the *Tathāgata*...who specially loved the suffering. His speech brought calm to the soul of Vāsavadattā. She died after having professed her faith in Buddha \*."

The Bhikkhus sometimes on the plea of giving advice on religion freely penetrated into the harem and tried to kindle the fire of libido in the heart of the bereaved and unsatisfied women. In a certain case, when a woman, apparently barren, asked one of these precious preachers how she could conceive, the Bhikkhu described in fearfully vivid detail the process which she might undergo with him to become the mother of a child. The various ways in which the women used to humour their inordinate passion with the monks cannot be described here at length, as they do not precisely come within our province. All these facts, however, only go to prove that the Buddhist *Samghas* tended to degenerate into so many centres of immorality even before the demise of the saintly Gautama. One cannot but feel for the pathetic outburst of the Great Master when in his last days he bitterly lamented before his disciple, Ānanda, for the great mistake he had committed in permitting women into his Holy Order†.

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\* *Buddha and Early Buddhism*—Arthur Lillie ( 1881 );  
also vide *Introduction*—Burnouf, pp. 131—132.

† *Vinaya Texts* III, pp. 325-326.

## CHAPTER IX.

### FROM AJATASATRU TO ALEXANDER.

The next king in the Saisunāga dynasty was Ajātaśatru. He had starved his father, Bimbisāra, to death, in order to usurp the throne of Magadha. He had an interview with the Buddha before the latter's death and confessed to him all the acts of sin he had committed or contemplated during his youth. He was, however, granted pardon and absolution by the great Lord. It is very difficult to accept the story of Ajātaśatru's parricide as historically correct, as Jain traditions absolutely ignore the terrible accusation against the king who, they assert, ruled for long eighty (!) years and patronised all forms of religion. The chief events of Ajātaśatru's reign were the wars with the kingdom of Kosala and the Lichchhavis of Tirhut. The Kosala king even after giving a brave stand, was obliged to negotiate peace with Ajātaśatru. As a result of the treaty, a princess of Kosala was given in marriage to the King of Magadha. His invasion of Tirhut was crowned with greater success and the whole confederacy including Vaisali, the capital, was easily occupied. The victor erected a fortress at the village of Pātali on the northern bank of the Sone near its confluence with the river Gangā. The foundations of a city nestling under the shelter of the strong fortress were laid by Ajātaśatru's grandson, Udaya\*. The city so founded has been variously known as Kusumapura,

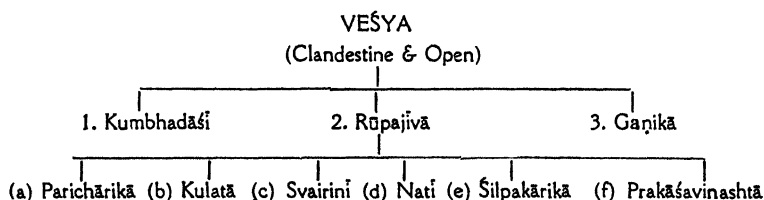
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\* Vincent A. Smith, *The Early History of India*, p. 37.

Pushpapura, Pātaliputra etc. It rapidly developed in dimension and grandeur. Afterwards it became the capital not only of the growing Magadha kingdom, but of the whole Indian Empire during the ascendancy of the Mauryas.

We have already noticed that every big capital-town in ancient India was considered ill-equipped if it could not boast of possessing a bunch of blooming courtezans within its walls, and that even one town vied with another in respect of the number, wealth and attainments of these girls of pleasure. It will be evident from the history given above that Vaiśali, once the proud harbour of some of the leading *ganikās* of the age, was greatly dismantled by the victorious hand of Ajātasatru and naturally began to lose its importance after the corner-stone of a big city had been laid not very far from it. In course of the next few years many of the Vaiśali *ganikās* and enterprising prostitutes of the neighbouring towns flocked to the budding city of Pātaliputra to find new avenues of trade and pleasure. Thus it was that Pātaliputra from the last decade of the sixth century B. C. became the centre of inevitable attractions for all wealthy pleasure-seekers of Northern India.

From the beginning of the fifth Century B. C. with the growing prosperity of Pātalipūtra, the prostitutes began to swell its population as well as to add to its attraction. Clandestine prostitution was also raising its hydra-heads from every corner of the town and rank of the society. Some time during this century a broad classification of all the prostitutes, open and clandestine, of the city was made as follows :—



The *Kumbhadāsī* was a low-class woman who acted as a maid-servant and also ministered unto the lust of the menials

of the household ; if young and handsome, she might sometimes count the head of the family as her occasional customer. Of course, these affairs went on surreptitiously as much as practicable.

The *Rūpajīvās* were clandestine prostitutes mainly dependent on their youth and beauty. They loved while they earned, though their love was frequently most wanton. The following sub-division shows not only the diverse nature and occupation of the *Rūpajīvās*, but also the graded secrecy of the *affaires d'amour* of each class, the last one almost reaching to a point of losing all privacy.

- (a) The *Paricharika* was something like a maid-of-honour or a lady-in-waiting in a respectable house. She gradually found her way into the good graces of or was dragged into forming a secret alliance with, either the master of the house or a member of his family.
- (b) The *Kulata* was a married woman who secretly and occasionally slipped out of her house to enjoy the embraces of one or more lovers. She was afraid of her husband and his relatives, and went astray not so much for the sake of money as for the romanticity of love or the satisfaction of her lust.
- (c) The *Svairinī* goes another step forward. She is not afraid of her husband, who, almost in all cases, is mealy-mouthed and devoid of the least sense of personality. She snubs him on his face and entertains her lovers either in her own house or that of another.
- (d) The *Natī* who professedly lives by dancing, music and acting on the stage, has often a fixed "man", with or without whose approval, she entertains people of her choice for earning "extra".
- (e) The *Silpakarika* is the wife (or sometimes the daughter) of a man engaged in independent labour or petty handicrafts, such as the washerman, the weaver, the carpenter, the potter etc. The husband or the father often connives at the misconduct, provided he receives a big fraction of the fruits of her labour.

(f) The *Prakāś'avinashṭa* is a woman (belonging to any caste or class) who during the life-time or after the death of her husband, forms indiscriminate liaison with any man that suits her purpose, money and sexual satisfaction being equally her desiderata. She gradually descends into a state little better than an open prostitute\*.

The *Ganikās* or the purely professional prostitutes were controlled by special laws of the state promulgated from time to time, and to a certain extent, protected by the religions too. The *ganikās* were broadly divided into two classes :—(a) those who lived in a brothel, and (b) those who put up in a private house, either rented or of their own. There were again those who used to live with one paramour as his mistress for a time and who only entertained flying visitors every night. For a common prostitute, the words *Ves'yā*, *Panya-strī*, *Vārāṅganā*, *Vesha-strī* etc. were hereafter used, but *Ganikā* has seldom been employed in a general sense. Probably about this time, the term "*ganikā*" had already begun to lose its original connotation and was strictly delimited to be used only for a special class of prostitutes who had like the Grecian hetairæ education and accomplishment in addition to their abundant capital of physical charms. It was when a prostitute was characterised by high intellectual attainments and a proficiency in all (or most of) the sixty-four *Kalās* (branches of art) that she could justly be given the appellation of a "*ganikā*". Vātsyāyana who flourished long after this and who admitted to have mostly acted as an intelligent compiler of the fragmentary writings of his predecessors, has given the definition of a *ganikā* in his *Kāmasutra*. It is easy to presume that the definition was taken from some of his foregoing authorities and that the newer import of the word became current long before his time. Vātsyāyana has laid down that unless a *ves'yā* is well-versed in the sixty-four *kalās*, she cannot properly be called a *ganikā*. A *ganikā* by virtue of her high intellectual attainments, singularly good qualifications and fine beauty

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\* *Kāmasutra*, Vaisikam, Ch. IV, S. 24. (Mahesh Ch. Paul's annotated Bengali edition, 1906).





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## The Natī of Pātaliputra

[ To face page 197.

( By the courtesy of the Editor, *Indian Historical Quarterly*. )

receives a seat of honour in the assemblage of men. She is held in esteem by the king and highly eulogised by the appreciative people. Her company and favours are always sought for, and she becomes the cynosure of all eyes\*.

The *ganikās* of Pātaliputra headed by the renowned Bīrasenā requested a scholar named Dattaka who lived in the city at that time (probably in the middle of the fifth century B. C.) and who had ostensibly spent many years in their association as an instructor in the *Kalās* to write a monograph on courtezanship; and accordingly he wrote for the first time a treatise with some such title as "What a Young Courtezan Ought to Know", which afterwards formed the basis of the 'Vaisikam' chapter of the *Kāmasutra*. Unfortunately the original of Dattaka's treatise is not available now. Vātsyāna has, no doubt, unreservedly borrowed from Dattaka in writing that particular chapter of his monumental work, but he has abridged most of the latter's matters, left out some and remodelled others. Nevertheless, it lends us enough room to be astonished at the vast experience, thorough mastery over the subject and deep insight of the original author, Dattaka, who still stands unrivalled and inimitable on the field, in as much during the 2400 years that have elapsed after him, not a second book bearing exactly upon his subject is known to have appeared in the field of any literature of the world. Some choice excerpts from Vātsyāna's chapters on 'Vaisikam' is being appended to this volume in order to enable our readers thereby to form an idea as to how deeply ancient Indian talent was employed to deal effectively with this often neglected but important branch of knowledge.

Dattaka had of course the advantage of consulting the masterpiece on the subject of erotics by Bābhavya, a chief of the

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\* अभिरभुङ्क्ता वेश्या शीलरूपगुणान्विता ।  
 लभते गणिकाशब्दं स्थानं च जनसंसदि ॥  
 पूजिता सा सदा राज्ञा गुणवद्विच सूक्ष्मता ।  
 प्रार्थनीयाऽभिगम्या च लक्ष्यभूता च जायते ॥

Pāṇchāla kingdom. He was as well-versed in the fine arts and flute-playing as in matters amatorial ; he first edited and is said to have abridged into 7 sections and 150 chapters the most original work of Śvetaketu with five hundred chapters. Bābhavya lived at least two centuries earlier than Dattaka. He was succeeded by Chārāyana\* and Ghotakamukha who were partly contemporary with Gautama Buddha and wrote small tracts on certain sections of erotology. Opinions differ, however, on the point whether this Śvetaketu was identical with that of the Vedic age—the one who formulated the law of bilateral chastity and is so often spoken of in the *Upanishads*. There might be more than one Śvetaketu in that there were several Vasisthas, Viśvāmitras, Janakas etc. Śvetaketu, the most archaic compiler of a book of erotics, is again said to have drawn inspiration from Nandī, the attendant of Śiva, undeniably a mythical figure. With the passing of time and the handling of the successive compilers, although the chapters were gradually being shortened, the knowledge became more refined and materials more comprehensive.

Dattaka's work was followed by a series of monographs on different branches of erotics by four other writers of known repute. They were Suvarṇanābha, Gonārđiya, Gonikāputra and Kuchamāra. These authors most likely flourished between 425 B. C. and 325 B. C. and formed four independent schools of amatorial knowledge, some of which has come down to us much reduced and greatly refashioned. Rajaśekhara in his *Kāvya-mīmamsa* refers to Suvarṇanābha as also the author of a treatise on a branch of Poetics named "Ritiniṛṇaya" and speaks of Kuchamāra as having extensively dealt with the *Aupanishadika* or occult side of erotology†. His treatise gives an illuminating exposition of the *modus operandi* of how a courtesan's daughter was to be brought up and introduced into the trade. It also treats

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\* He is identified with Dīgha Chārāyana, the general of the Kosala army. [Vide Prof. Barua's *A History of Pre-Buddhist Indian Philosophy*, Chap. on "Erotic Morals".]

† *Studies in Vatsyana's Kamasutra*—H. C. Chakladar, p. 11.,

of the duties, manners and peculiar customs of the prostitutes of the time. Though it may strike us as strange, yet it is true that most of the customs prevalent some 2200 to 2300 hundred years before, have undergone very little changes and are still in vogue amongst them.

Kuchamāra advises a courtesan to guard her young daughter against the overtures and indiscriminate association of youths. She should, of course, invite such youths as are fit for her daughter, possessing accomplishments, a knowledge of the *Kalās*, character and beauty, and entertain them in an excellent manner according to her wealth and status. Then she should intimate them that her daughter would be given (in so-called marriage) to the person who would give such and such things desired by her daughter. Thus proclaiming, she should carefully guard her daughter against the approaches of the youths and thereby increase her worth and attractiveness. But the daughter should sometimes negotiate love separately with the rich sons of the citizens apparently without the knowledge (but really with the tacit approval) of her mother [so that each of them may know that the girl loves him too dearly as she has had to overcome the strong surveillance of her mother]. The places of their meeting are a hall of music, the retreat of a reliable mendicant woman or such other places as temples, gardens etc.

The mother should give her daughter's hand amidst a pseudo-nuptial ceremony to the person who agrees to pay what has been set as the price for the first post-marriage "libation"\*. If she does not get the whole amount which has been proclaimed as the price

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\* Even the courtesan's daughter after attaining puberty had, then, as a rule, to go through a form of marriage with a young man. The man before the marriage gave a large sum in advance towards the expenses of the ceremony. Thus he could enjoy the virginity of the girl without entailing any legal obligation in result of this marriage. According to the prevailing custom of the time he was only responsible for the maintenance of her for atleast a year, after which he could part a bachelor. Where a suitable man was not available, nuptials were symbolically contracted with a stick, a sword, a knife, a tree or an idol. This shows that even the prostitute abhorred the idea of remaining a spinster all throughout her life. This custom of sham marriage is still current among many races of prostitutes in India.

offered by the prospective bridegroom for the marriage, she should secretly make up the balance with a portion of her own money, giving out that the whole sum has already been paid by the man [ so that her daughter's worth may thereby remain intact in the public eye ]. In case the formal ceremonial marriage of her daughter has already been performed according to some peculiar custom among them (such as with a stick, a sword, a tree etc), she should at the proper age go in for the consummation of marriage with a man who would end her maidenhood, after he has paid the stipulated sum (which was, of course, always very high).

Or the mother should connive for a time at her daughter's relationship with an accomplished youth and afterwards bring the whole matter to the notice of the wise elders for deciding how much the man ought to pay as penal contribution towards her daughter's nuptial ceremony, his familiarity with her daughter having cropped up without her knowledge or approval. Or in case if there be no one available to perform her daughter's 'first nuptials' and the necessity for initiating her daughter in amatory subjects has arisen, the mother should allow her to be trained in these matters by a female friend or an adroit woman-servant of hers. After the girl has thus gained the rudimentary knowledge of practical erotics and been taught the different postures in copulation, her mother should proclaim her as a lovely girl in the very prime of her youth open to negotiation and try to attract all voluptuous youths around her.

These are the ways current from very ancient times. For one whole year after the ceremonial marriage with a person, the young courtesan must interest herself in him alone. Thereafter she may act as she likes. Even after the lapse of the period, if at any time the formal husband puts in an appearance and desires coition with her, she should, even by foregoing the profit she would otherwise have derived from entertaining other visitors, spend the night with the man.

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## CHAPTER X.

### FROM CHANDRAGUPTA TO ASOKA.

According to the Pauranic lists, Udaya's successors were the Nandas. The last of the Sisunāga dynasty is said to have had by a Śūdra woman (probably a concubine) a son named Mahapadma Nanda who usurped the throne and established the Nanda line at about 413 B. C.. Practically the whole history of this dynasty is wrapped up in obscurity. But when Alexander came in conflict with Poros, king of Takshasilā (327-26 B. C.), he was informed by a native chieftain named Bhagala of an eastern monarch who reigned at Pātaliputra and who had a splendid force of horse, foot, chariots and elephants. The "report made to Alexander can have referred only to the king of Magadha, who must have been one of the Nandas mentioned in Native traditions\*." The reigning king is alleged to have been extremely unpopular owing to his maladministration, Draconian rigidity and base origin. He was, it is said, the son of a barber, who having become the paramour of the queen of the last legitimate sovereign, contrived the king's death, and under the pretence of acting as a guardian of his minor sons got them under his clutches and exterminated every potential seed of the royal family. After this, he begot on the lecherous dowager-queen a son who was reigning at the time of Alexander's famous Indo-Asiatic campaign. There is no doubt that the last of these

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\* *The Early History of India*, Vincent A. Smith, p. 42.

unworthy Nandas was deposed and slain by Chandragupta Maurya, who again seems to have been an illegitimate scion of the family\*. Two or three years before this incident, Alexander had swept like a hurricane through Afghanistan, the Punjab and Sind ; and it is said that Chandragupta, then but a youth, had met the mighty Macedonian as his temporary ally. He had been serving in the office of "Senāpati" or commander-in-chief under the last Nanda king ; but is said to have made an attempt to rise against his master, was prematurely found out and had to fly for his life along with a band of his fellow-conspirators. At that time, the overbearing arrogance of the monarch had insulted a great sage and scholar, who had enough of old Biśwāmītra in him not to take even a royal affront tamely.

Fate joined the hands of that dissatisfied soldier with this disgruntled sage, and thanks to the wonderful sagacity of the latter, in an incredibly short time the Nandas were overthrown and the very memory of this dynasty was ruthlessly effaced. As has already been noticed, Chandragupta had come in touch with Alexander the Great and the Greek army, but it is very doubtful if the Greeks had much to teach this adventurous commander of the Nandas ; yet whatever knowledge he had acquired, he was not slow to employ against the Greeks themselves when time came for him to fight Seleucus, the Greek Governor and Commander of Alexander's eastern dominions. After the humiliating peace which Seleucus had to conclude along with the gift of his daughter to Chandragupta and cession of a substantial portion of the eastern dominions including the North-western Punjab and Afghanistan, the period of the most strenuous time in the life of this soldier of fortune came to a close ; and the year 305 B. C. saw the Empire of the Maurya adventurer of Pātaliputra safely established.

In course of time Emperor Chandragupta Maurya reigned over a territory far larger in point of area and splendour than any

\* *Op. cit.*, p. 43.

Murā, the mother of Chandragupta was a servant-maid in the household of the last Nanda King and from her name the dynasty founded by her son was called "Maurya".

of his predecessors. His Prime Minister, Chānakya was that great Brahmin scholar whose astounding genius and vindictive ingenuity practically lifted him on to the throne and who is variously known as Brāhmaṇa Vishnugupta, Kautilya, the author etc. The recently recovered *Arthasastra* ascribed to this towering talent, and written at a period (between 321 and 296 B.C.) which clearly falls just after the beginning of Maurya rule, throws a flood of light on the then laws, manners and customs of the people.

Maurya Period saw a great renaissance in all the branches of art and literature both in Sanskrit and Pāli and an appreciable change in the status of the *ganikas* who had been for centuries the devout worshippers of all kinds of arts\*. Pātaliputra as before remained the flourishing centre of prostitution, and it was probably for the first time that the attention of the state was drawn to this colony of public women for its effective control and to bring it under the obligation of a stabilised taxation. "Taxes were levied on prostitutes who seem to have remained under the direct jurisdiction of royal officials and were regarded as royal property as in some countries of the Middle Ages. They were under the Superintendent of Prostitutes (गणिकाध्यक्ष) who fixed their rates and fees, settled their disputes and complaints or decided cases relating to their succession†." Probably their taxes were fixed in direct ratio to their income, as we find a distinct law in the *Arthashastra* which required that every prostitute must supply information to the Superintendent as to the amount of her daily fees (*bhoga*), her prospective income in the near future (*āyati*) and the name of the paramour or paramours under her influence. During a greater part of the Maurya reign, they had to pay the state the earnings of two days in every month. The same rule applied to an actor, a dancer, a singer, a player on musical instruments, buffoon (*vagjivana*), a mimic player (*kusilava*), a rope-dancer (*plavaka*), juggler (*saubhika*), a wandering bard or panegyrist (*chārana*), pimps and any unchaste woman.

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\* *Kamasutra* —K. Rangaswami Iyengar, 105, S. 52.

† *Kautilya*—Prof. N. C. Bandyopadhyaya, M.A., pp. 142, 153.



The Superintendent of the *ganikās* was, as a rule, furnished with a complete list of the brothel-keepers and the harlots under them by the "Nāgaraka" (city-officer) who assisted him in keeping peace in brothels and private houses of the prostitutes at night. The Superintendent seems to have also been closely connected with, and superior in position to, the *Antarvamsika* who acted as the leader of the harem and harem-guards. The *Antarbamsika* who more closely resembles the "Mayor of the Royal Palace" of Medieval Europe, was directly responsible for preserving order in the palace and the personal safety of the king. He had a pretty big staff at his disposal for the purpose.

The Imperial capital since its foundation about the commencement of 500 B. C. had grown much in extent, wealth and magnificence. A high and thick wooden palisade went round the city serving it as an outer rampart, and the city opened up on the river by no less than 64 well-carved, spectacular, massive gates. "The royal palace though chiefly made of timber was considered to excel in splendour and magnificence the palaces of Susa or Exbatana, its gilded pillars being adorned with golden vines and silver birds." The royal residence stood in an well-kept, extensive park, studded with fish ponds; there were shady groves and trees set in clumps and branches woven out and intertwined by marvellous methods of horticulture.

The Imperial Court too was maintained in a redundant style and with luxurious ostentation. "Basins and goblets of gold some measuring six feet in width, richly carved tables and chairs of state, vessels of Indian copper set with precious stones and gorgeous embroidered robes were to be seen in profusion, and contributed to the brilliancy of public ceremonies. When the king condescended to show himself in public on state occasions, he was carried in a gold palanquin, adorned with tassels of pearls and clothed in fine muslin embroidered with purple and gold"\*. The king loved to be fanned by two courtezans of exquisite beauty and closely guarded by armed female amazons who were recruited from foreign countries. These

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\* *Arthasastra*, Shamasastri's edition, p. 49.

foreign amazons formed an indispensable factor to the court of the ancient Indian monarchs even before the Mauryas\*.

In addition to these, the Maurya Emperors from the time of Chandragupta employed a large number of prostitutes as their bath-room servants, shampooers, chamber-maids, dyers and cleaners and garland-makers. This fashion was no doubt imitated by other feudatory chiefs and independent sovereigns. The prostitutes thus employed were required before they presented the king with water, scents, fragrant powders, dresses, garlands etc., to touch these things by their eyes, arms and breasts†. Scantily and alluringly dressed, they used to hold the royal umbrella, carry the golden pitcher and drinking cups and supply prepared betel-nuts for the king and fan him two at a time. They used always to attend the king when he was seated on his throne or in his litter or chariot. These harem-girls were under the orders of the Superintendent or the Deputy Superintendent known as अन्तर्वेशिकः. He was in charge of all arrangements relating to the court-*ganikās* and their respective duties ; and he used to dismiss the delinquents and enlist fresh recruits of standard beauty and qualifications to fill in the different ranks in the king's household.

The court-atmosphere was, as a matter of fact, full of suspicion, intrigues and distrust, and every precaution was taken for the safety of the king's life. The dangers in those days, in India as well as in other countries and in all ages, besetting the life of a despotic king, were often apprehended from the following sources :—(a) secret assassins in alliance with the king's concubines and mistresses, ready to administer poison to him, or to set fire to the whole harem at night ; (b) the rebellious hands of the king's near relatives, queens and sons, either legitimate or illegitimate,

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\* Vincent A. Smith, *The Early History of India*, p. 128.

Even in Vedic times, we find a monarch named Namuchi keeping a regular platoon of amazons who besides acting as body-guards and vehicles of pleasure in times of peace, went out to fight on horse-back and win the laurel for their master. Most of them were, as a matter of course, married to the king. Once in a fight with Indra, the King of gods captured two of the leading soldier-wives of Namuchi.

[Vide *Vaidic Bharat*, Rai D. C. Sen Bahadur, D. Litt., p. 22.]

acting on their own initiative or in league with the powerful leaders of a popular party. The queens and royal concubines were not always regarded as objects of trust. Spies in various guises were employed to watch their quarters; eunuchs were charged to exercise supervision about their apartments. Men over eighty years or women over fifty years were employed to keep strict vigilance on the diurnal doings of the queens and concubines. The dancing girls and others who came from outside had every time to be stripped naked as well as to undergo a bath, a thorough massage and change their dress before they were admitted into the royal household. Moreover, all men and women of the palace were carefully watched by the attendants and informers of the Superintendent; not even the relatives of the harem-women were admitted into the palace except in case of serious illness or childbirth and that after closest examination of their persons. The courtezans were also extensively employed as spies by the government to watch over and report on the movements of the suspects within the palace and without.

"This was not all. The king was not to visit any of the women until and unless their purity was vouchsafed for by the elderly ladies or men who acted as the guardians of the harem. This might appear rather too humiliating to the women or too mean of the king, but, trust or faith in one, specially in women, was no part of the political life of those days. Kings were not to be guided by love, affection or sentiment. They were to be guided by the example of the past, and Kautilya here cites a list of those kings who had been murdered in the harem, with a view to remind them of the consequences of good faith or carelessness in dealing with women. The list he gives occurs in the works of many subsequent writers\* and became a sort of stock-list al-

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\* Cf. *Kamandakiya Nitisara* (Travancore and Raja Rajendra Lala Mitra's editions), Ch. VII. Ss. 50-54.

Of these examples, those of King Jarusha of Ajodhyā and Vidūratha, the Vrishni monarch, need a little elucidation here.

The queen of Jarusha was sorely annoyed and practically bubbling over with rage at the king's love-intrigues with other women. One night when he was washing himself after having had coition with her, the queen in pursuance of a preconcei-

ways to be remembered with horror. It contains the names of princes who met death even in the asylum of love, either through the hand of the queen professing loyalty to her lord or of the son or brother in league with such rebellious women. We find thus the names of Bhadrasena murdered by his brother-in-law concealed in the queen's room, of the Karusa king murdered by his son concealed under the bed of his mother, of the king of Kāśī murdered by his queen who mixed poison in his food, of Vairanty the King of Sauvira, of King Jaludha or of King Vidūratha, all murdered by their queens with weapons concealed under their garments, in the braid of their hair or with poison in their ornaments\*".

Kautilya's *Arthasāstra*, the ancient and most authoritative treatise on Hindu polity and civics, gives us an elaborate detail of the functions of that important official called "Gaṇikādhakshya" both in the king's palace and outside. Even at this age we are surprised at the marvellous and nearly perfect organisation of this very important side of the social structure of the time. The chapter devoted in the *Arthasāstra* to the regulation of public women is well worth a study and reproduced as hereunder :—

"The Superintendent of the prostitutes shall employ (at the king's court) on a salary of 1000 *panas* (per annum), a prostitute (*ganikā*) whether born or not born of a prostitute family and noted for her beauty, youth and accomplishments.

"A rival prostitute on half the above salary (*Kutumbardhana*) shall also be appointed.

"Whenever a prostitute goes abroad or dies, her daughter or sister shall act for her and shall receive her salaries; or her mother may substitute another prostitute. In absence of any of these, the king himself shall take the property. With a view to add to

ved plan, suddenly let fall over him a big mirror which had been kept smeared all over with poison.

King Vidūratha spent one of his wives' portion in feeding prostitutes which gave occasion for her extreme mortification. She had before retirement laid hidden in her long braids of hair a small weapon with which she murdered her sleeping husband and thus retaliated.

\* *Kautilya*—Prof. N. N. Bandyopadhyaya, M. A., pp. 96-97.

the splendour of the prostitutes holding the royal umbrella, golden pitcher and fan, and attending upon the king seated on a royal litter, a throne or a chariot, prostitutes shall be classified as of first, middle and highest rank according to their beauty and splendid jewellery; likewise their salary is to be fixed in thousands.

"She who has lost her beauty shall be appointed as a nurse.

"A prostitute shall pay 24,000 *panas* as ransom to regain her liberty and a prostitute's son 12,000.

"From the age of 8 years, a prostitute shall hold musical performance before the king.

Those prostitutes, female slaves and old women who are incapable of rendering any service in the form of enjoyment (*bhagnabhogah*) shall work in the store-house or kitchen of the king.

"A prostitute who, putting herself under the protection of a private person, ceases to attend the king's court, shall pay a *pana*-and-a-quarter per mensem to the Government. The Superintendent shall determine the earning, inheritance, income, expenditure and future earning of every prostitute. He shall check their extravagant expenditure.

"When a prostitute puts her jewellery in the hands of any person but her mother, she shall be fined  $4\frac{1}{4}$  *panas*.

"If she sells or mortgages her property, she shall be fined  $50\frac{1}{4}$  *panas*.

"A prostitute shall be fined 24 *panas* for defamation, twice as much for causing hurt,  $50\frac{1}{4}$  *panas* as well as  $1\frac{1}{2}$  *panas* for cutting off the ear of any person.

"When a man has connection with a prostitute against her will, or with the virgin girl of a prostitute (*kumari*), he shall be punished with the highest amercement. But when he has connection with a willing prostitute (under age), he shall be punished in the first amercement.

"When a man keeps under confinement or abducts a prostitute against her will or disfigures her by causing hurt, he shall be fined 100 *panas* or more rising up to twice the amount of her ransom according to the circumstances of the crime and the position and status of the prostitute.

"When a prostitute does not yield her person to any one under the orders of the king, she shall receive 1000 lashes or pay a fine of 5000 *panas*.

"When, having received the requisite amount of fees, a prostitute dislikes to yield her person, she shall be fined twice the amount of fees.

"When, in her own house, a prostitute deprives her paramour of her enjoyment, she shall be fined 8 times the amount of fees, unless the paramour happens to be diseased or have personal defects \*."

These Superintendents of the royal harem and the courtezans were called *Stri-Adhyaksha-Mahāmātras* during the time of Asoka, and their posts were maintained most likely till the seventh century A. D. Their powers were curtailed or enhanced with each individual reign of the kings, but probably they rose to the highest pinnacle of importance during the reign of Asoka. The *Stri-Adhyaksha-Mahāmātra's* functions were, we believe, afterwards bifurcated and vested with two separate officers, the one charged with supervising the king's gynecium and the other with controlling the *ganikās* of the city.

These posts were not unknown in the medieval Europe, and even in earlier Roman History we have come across the *ædiles* who kept a regular register of and a close watch over all the prostitutes of the great capitolian city. But the office of something like a provost or 'Mayor of the Palace' was for the first time created by Emperor Charlemagne about the eighth century A. D., as we find in his famous capitular the origin of the word *ministerialis palatinus*. Even after a lapse of four centuries, we find these important officials in the court of France policing the interior of the royal palace under a different designation, viz., the *Roi des ribauds* (king of the ribaulds). Their special duty was to expel from the royal residence all vagabonds and women of questionable virtue not in the regular service of the king. They had the right of life and death over individuals who caused disorder or mischief in the king's household, excepting the relations of the royal blood. *Aimoin* (Bk. V., Ch. 10)

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\* *Arthasastra* of Kautilya (Shamasastri's edition), Chapter XXVII.

reports that a *Roi des ribauds* named Louise-le-Debonnaire expelled from the palace a large troop of women attached to the service of the king and queen's sisters. "But undoubtedly these women were not slow in reappearing, and the courts of kings, queens and princes became the objective of all travelling ambitions, of all interested vices, of all low beings."

The powers of the king of the ribaulds reached to a point of consummation during the reign of Phillip-Augustus who turned a large number of thieves, beggars, gamblers, agents of debauchery and common whores who often hanged about the royal palace in spite of threats and punishments, into a few regiments of camp-followers in times of war. The Minister of the Palace or the *Roi des ribauds* used not only to guard the chambers of the king after the curfew, but also to commend any beautiful woman (may be the wife or the daughter of any government officer or a woman of the town) to his master, and if approved, to resort to any contrivance to bring her down on the lap of the latter. These strange superintendents during the decadence of their morale used to demand five sous in gold as the price of silence of every married woman (attached directly or indirectly to the court) who were found to carry illicit relations with a man other than the king.

The officers were, however, gradually shorn of their ancient privileges when they were found to have been abusing their power, and the post was totally abolished in the sixteenth century. During the end of this century almost on the ruins of the *roi des ribauds*, another post was brought into existence which was called *Dame des filles de joie suivant* ("Matron of the daughters of joy following the court") who remained charged with the policing of the women of royal courts, almost like the *Mahattarikas* or *Agarika* of Indian harems during the age within our purview.

During the reign of the Mauryas slave-traffic was ruthlessly suppressed. As we have observed, from the Vedic times, slave girls had been adorning the gynecium of kings and rich people. They were completely at the mercy of their masters who could enjoy their beauty or ravage their chastity at their pleasure. The most

accomplished and youthful of these girls, even during the rule of the Sisunāga dynasty, formed valuable presents for the aristocracy to be given away to their faithful subordinates. Santati the minister of king Pasenadi was awarded with a dancing maid because he had been able to suppress a revolt. Abhaya, the son of Bimbisāra, similarly received a nautch-girl from his royal father. Prince Kusa who was highly pleased with the service of his garland-maker Sumana, presented him with eight women from the royal harem and eight female slaves. Vessantara's gift to his Myrmidons included several hundred women. The usual price of a slave-girl in those days was 100 pieces of silver\*.

At the time of Kautilya, sale or giving away as presents of children as slaves and pregnant helot-maids was severely penalised, and by a royal charter all children born of men and women who had bartered their personal freedom were proclaimed as freemen. The Kautilyan regulations conferred rights on the slaves to inherit property and made their natural relatives their legal representatives. The slaves-girls were, however, permitted to remain at his master's seraglio provided she earned sufficient wages in lieu of her labour, in whatever shape it might have been administered. But she was free to leave her master's protection, if the master engaged her in dirty works, tyrannised over her, kept her without a raiment or violated her chastity, against her wish †. In case a slave-girl was employed as a concubine by her master and became the mother of children, she together with her children was at once deemed as free of any obligation to him (स्वामिनस्तस्या दास्यां जाते समस्तकनदासं विद्यात्). In that case, the master was presumably obliged to stand responsible for their maintenance so long she was not elsewhere engaged. There were, on the other hand, royal slaves or enslaved criminals employed in large numbers by the state in its private farms and factories. "Old prostitutes too were employed ‡" here, but for what purpose it is not clear. No

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\* *Women in Ancient India (with Special Reference to Pali Literature)*—R. P. Chowdhury M.A., P.R.S., p. 36.

† *Arthashastra*, Shamasastri's edition, pp. 182-183.

‡ *Kautilya*, N. N. Bandyopadhyaya M.A., p. 216.



doubt, "the lot of these was harder" in as much as they, in addition to their acting as assistants to the male-labourers, had probably to minister unto their rude salacity.

As regards the daily life of the citizens during the reign of Chandragupta and his successors, the public side of it was sufficiently gay. The people were frugal in diet and remarkably sober except in times of festivals. The chief display of luxury was in dress and ornaments. The inns, hostelrys, gambling houses were numerous. Entertainments were provided by different grades of dancers, singers, stage-actors etc. Public women plied their trade under strict regulations and supervision as detailed before, though they could freely take part in all public functions. They lived at the southern portion of the city, and it is significant that this part also had a large number of liquor and meat shops. Musicians and low class artists also lived at this quarter\*. It is also to be noted that the prostitutes were being always quartered at the southern side of the city from a very ancient time. In *Agni Purāna*, too, we find that the ideal plan of the town is "with harlots in the south." *Matsya*, too, has not omitted to mention not only the site of a harlot's house, but how many cubic foot each of her rooms should be†.

The empire of Chandragupta passed in peaceful succession to his son, Bindusāra and his grandson, Asoka. No definite account of the reign of Bindusāra is up till now available. Asoka as an emperor was clearly a man of peace and piety, but unfortunately not much is known about his private life. It is, however, safe to assume that the social history of Pātaliputra and the neighbouring cities and kingdoms did not undergo any palpable change during the reign of these two mighty monarchs, as the reputation of law and order in their vast empire was so firmly established that in their long reigns no internal feud or foreign invasion of any dimension worth noting ventured to raise its head.

\* *Town Planning in Ancient India* by Benode Behari Dutt, M. A., B. L., p. 150.

† Vide *Matsya Purāna*, Ch. CCLXIV.

It was mainly the sincere and vastly organised propaganda of Asoka that established Buddhism as the dominant religion of India and Ceylon, and this great work alone "entitles him to rank for all time with that small body of men who may be said to have changed the faith of the world". No wonder that the recently unearthed pillars and edicts of Asoka should mostly be concerned with his *Dhamma* and the means he adopted for its dissemination. "They naturally therefore throw a flood of light on his life and career after he became a Buddhist".

Of course, Asoka had his personal *Avarodhana* or gynecium. He had four or five legal wives who did not always reside at Pātaliputra with the Emperor and had separate private residences away from the Imperial capital. In Pillar Edict VII, Asoka speaks of his having commissioned some of the state-officers to induce the members of his own household to make charities and to see to their proper organisation. "It is interesting to note what members of the family he mentions in this connection. Of course, he speaks first of himself and his queens. But immediately after his queens, he makes reference to his *Avarodhana* and tells us that its inmates were living not only at his capital but also in the provinces. Anybody who reads the passages carefully cannot but think that his queens were not the only members of his *Avarodhana*. Who could then be the other members? They cannot be wives of the male relatives, for they cannot with propriety be called his *Avarodhana*. Were they his left-handed wives? His *Avarodhana* would thus comprise not only the queens but also Purdah ladies of lower status. This no doubt reminds us of the Sinhalese tradition that when Asoka during his father's life-time was the viceroy of Ujjain, he formed connection with a lady of the Setthi caste who resided at Vedisagiri, Besnagar near Bhilsa \*."

Tradition avers that his faithful Chief Queen for many years was Asandhimitrā. After the death of this wife and when already

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\* *Asoka*—D. R. Bhandarkar M.A. (Bomb). pp. 13-14.

Vide also *Asoka* (Gaekwad Lecture)—Prof. R. K. Mukherjee M. A., Ph. D. etc.

grown old, Asoka married a dissolute young woman named Tishyarakshīā or Tisyaraksā, "concerning whom and her step son, prince Kunāla, the old folk-lore tale is related with much imaginative embellishments\*." *Kunāla Avadana* gives this story in detail. The sum and substance of it is as follows † :—

Tisyaraksā, wife of the Emperor Asoka, was greatly moved by the naive beauty of, and took a fancy to, her step-son Prince Kunāla. Making away with all sense of modesty and throwing away to the winds all considerations about the solemn relationship she bore this young man, she made her amorous overtures more than once to him. But Kunāla who could hardly conceive a dissipation of this nature, and above all, bore a strong moral character, gave her a strong reprimand and flatly refused to agree to her nefarious proposal. "Hell knoweth no fury like a woman scorned" ; Tisyaraksā's unrequited love turned atonce to hatred and she looked about for an opportunity to avenge herself. Some time after this, the Prince was sent to Takshaṣīlā at the head of a large army to consolidate the Maurya conquest there. In the meantime the old Emperor fell ill, and the royal physician's failure to effect a cure induced his pet wife, Tisyaraksā, to take the case in her own hand. Her wonderful way of nursing and treatment soon put Asoka on the fair road to recovery. The Emperor in grateful recognition of the services of his queen, deigned to bestow on her any favours that she might dictate. Tisyaraksā's prayer for ruling the mighty Empire for seven days was forthwith granted.

Thereafter this heartless Empress sent a behest under the royal seal to Kuṇḍarakarṇa of Takshaṣīlā to uproot the eyes of Kunāla and drive him atonce from the kingdom empty-handed and in rags. Kunāla saw the letter bearing the terrible sentence of his step-mother, and uprooted the eyeballs with his own hand without the least sign of tremor or dismay. Then with his

\* The Early History of India—Vincent A. Smith, p. 201.

Vide also *Cambridge History Of India*—Rapson, p. 500.

† *Women in Buddhist Literature*—B. C. Law. M. A. B. L., pp. 47 & 48,

wife Kānchanmālā, he left Takshaśilā in the garb of a beggar. After a few years of wandering life, the unfortunate couple came to Pātaliputra. One day before the elephant-gate of the palace they began to sing in tune with the lute a very pathetic song which fortunately floated into ears of the Emperor. He at once recognised his son and daughter-in-law and learned the whole fact leading to his blindness and misery. The infuriated Emperor was about to burn Tisyaraksā to death, when Kunāla's importunate appeal won for her a pardon.

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## CHAPTER XI.

### IN THE AGE OF VĀTSYĀYANA.

The Maurya Empire did not last long in India. After the death of Asoka in about 232 B. C., his blind son, Kunāla seems to have reigned only for a handful of years to be succeeded by two grandsons of the "Piyadasi" Emperor. Probably at this time the Empire split up into two independent divisions like the later Roman Empire, in charge of two seniormost members of the family. The last of the Mauryas, Brihadratha, who ruled over the eastern division and was too weak to check the gradual dwindlement of the Empire boundaries, was slain by his commander-in-chief, Pushyamitra Sunga (about 184 B. C.) who, however, founded the Sunga Dynasty which was in existence upto 72 B. C.

The western outlying provinces and frontier districts had long asserted their independence, mostly under adventurous Greek usurpers, who often cast their greedy glances from their own principalities towards the very heart of India. Demetrius, Apollodotus and Menander, the Greek kings of Bactria and Kabul valley led expeditions into the midland of North India at the fag-end of Maurya and the beginning of the Sunga reigns. The expedition of Menander was most successful, though it was not followed by any permanent occupation. Menander, of course, occupied northern and eastern Punjab and established his capital at Sakala (Sialkot). He is said to have reduced

Surashtra, Madhyamika (the region about Chitor in Rājputanā), the Pāṇchāla country (the Gangā-Jamunā doab), Mathura, Saketa (in southern Oudh), and reached almost at the gates of Pāṭaliputra, where he was met by the valiant army of Pushyamitra Sunga\*.

Though Greek political power was never perceptibly implanted in any other parts of India than the North-western Frontier Province and certain portions of the Punjab, Sind and Kathiāwār, the light of the Hellenic civilisation percolated through all barriers of restrictions to influence to a certain extent our central customs, manners, literature, art, architecture and religion. The pulse-waves of Parthian and the somewhat crude Scythian (Saka & Kushan) civilisation also were not feebly felt for a time during the age within our purview.

The Maurya period is marked by great religious and literary progress. Of the vast wealth of literature that can be ascribed to this period, four works are of outstanding merit and all in their spheres substantially important. They are the *Arthasāstra* of Kautilya, the *Kathāvatthu* of Upagupta, the *Mahābhāṣhya* of Patanjali and the *Kāmasutra* of Vātsyāyana, the last-named one concerning us for our present purpose. As has already been said, it is in Vātsyāyana's *Kāmasutra* that we strike a gold mine of informations appertaining to our subject. Though Vātsyāyana, in a spirit of extreme courtesy, has in more than one place of his book subscribed himself as a humble compiler, yet from the internal evidence one is amply convinced that he was not only an able compiler, but a very intelligent editor and highly discriminating commentator and a most erudite scholar on the subject he handled. He is known to have gleaned with the utmost care and caution the erotic knowledge extant in his time and that left by his predecessors in worm-eaten manuscripts, and embodied them in an well-arranged and pithy *sutra* form in order to make them easily acceptable to the average memory.

But that the work thus compiled was greatly enriched by his personal knowledge and experience, and many new matters

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\* Vide *Brihat Samhita*, Kern; *Ind. Anti.* VII, Kielhorn, p. 266; and also *Gargi Samhita* (Yuga Purāna chapter).

bearing on the subject were most authoritatively added to it both by him as well as by some of his successors from time to time, it will not be hard for one to infer. So for justice's sake, it is desirable that we should attribute the authorship of the bulk of the work entitled *Kāmasutra* to Vātsyāyana, though at the same time bearing in mind that the rudiments of knowledge he has endeavoured to elaborate had been known from ages prior to him. The author, however, seems to have been conversant with the habits and customs prevailing in almost all parts of India in his time, and the elucidating informations given in his book of the sexual lives of men and women of the different races and tribes in general, and of the women of easy virtue in particular, have contributed much to the study of Ethnology and Esoteric Sociology of ancient India.

Until very recent times, a conspiracy of solemn silence was maintained everywhere on the most vital phenomenon of life, and any frank discussion referring to the problems of sex was placed outside the pale of polite society. The modern public interest in sexual questions have of late succeeded in delving into the hidden treasures of a long-overlooked genius who still stands as the highest authority on the behaviouristic side and applied principles of the Science of Erotics in the whole world. In ancient times this treatise was an indispensable *vade-mecum* to all poets and dramatists in their probationary stage, as a perfect knowledge of the Science of Erotics and the "Art of Dalliance" was a necessary concomitant in the production of good poetry and popular comedies. There was but one Ovid in the Latin land of yore to speak with any authority on *Ars Amoris*, but in Sanskrit literature almost every classic poet and dramatist can be considered a veritable replica of Ovidus Naso !

At present a heated controversy centres round the age of Vātsyāyana and the actual date of composition of his masterpiece. While one school would go to place him in 300 B. C., yet another equally eminent band of scholars would like to bring him down to 300 A. D.. Recently Prof. H. C. Chakladar has dealt with the subject in a very able and exhaustive manner in his *Social Life in Ancient India : Studies in Vatsyayana's*

*Kāmasutra*. Unfortunately a perusal of this work leaves the impression that the monographist to prove his proposition has dished up all the arguments with a pronouncedly preconceived notion which holds that Vātsyāyana could not have lived before the third century A. D.. But he in his enthusiasm has overlooked the fact that the very arguments he has thus utilised for himself can with equal force be set off against him to show that this composition is almost as old as the *Arthasastra* itself. It may be recalled here that before the original manuscript of the *Arthasastra* was found out and restored by Pandit Shamasastri of Mysore, even eminent scholars of the type of Prof. Jolly and Prof. Winternitz had tried to prove by the most convincing arguments at their disposal that it was a composition of the 3rd century A. D.\*; and that Vātsyāyana thrived most probably a century later than Kautilya. If it has now been proved beyond doubt that *Arthasastra* was a composition of the last decades of the fourth century B. C., then perhaps few will hesitate to assign *Kāmasutra* to the last decade of the third century B. C. (or the first decades of the 2nd century B. C. at the most).

Prof. Winternitz is further of opinion that the "great similarity between the two books makes it clear that *Kāmasutra* is separated from Kautilya only by a short interval." Mahāmahopādhyāya Śāstri in his "Magadhan Literature" has reckoned the date of *Kāmasutra* somewhere in the 1st Century A. D. According to him "Vātsyāyana flourished at a time when the memory of the scandal of Kuntala Satakarni was fresh†," but this argument, as Mr. Chakladar rightly observes, falls to the ground in that in the 1st century A. D. "we have no evidence of Abhira monarchs ruling side by side with the Andhras". It is undeniable as Prof. Chakladar has sought to establish that there are few internal historical evidences, such as certain occurrences during the reign of the Andhra Satakarnis and an Abhira king, which tend to assign the text of the extant *Kāmasutra* to so late a date as 300 A. C. But these allusions may be mere illustrative incidental

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\* *Arthasastra of Kautilya*—a new Edition Vol. I (Lahore, 1923) pp. 21-29.

† *Magadhan Literature* by MM. Haraprosad Sastri (Calcutta, 1933) p. 84.



references introduced by a later remodeller of the text. Anyway we are not prepared to agree with Prof. Chakladar in regarding the text in its entirety as a literary composition of the 3rd century A. D.. For, this would take the text far beyond that period of literary development which saw the production of a number of works in both Sanskrit and Pali having the same general traits or characteristics, such texts as the *Arthasastra* of Kautilya, the *Susruta Samhita*, the *Nettipakarana* and the *Petakopadesa*.

In all these treatises, the authors have tried to rigourously follow a textual and exegetical methodology—the Science of *Tantrayuktis*, the number of which gradually increased from thirty-two to thirty-four and even to a larger total with the progress of time. In all these treatises we find that in each chapter and section firstly the theme is set out in brief (*Uddesa*), and then at the next step it is substantially developed in the specification of meaning (*Nirdesha*), and the full elaboration is reached at the third stage of illustration (*Pratinirdesa*), there being no room left open for interpolation except by way of “pratinirdeśa”. This stage of literary and scientific development began somewhere in the fourth century B. C. and was consummated by the beginning of the Christian era. In the light of this observation, the bulk of the text of Vātsyāyana may safely be relegated to the concluding portion of third or the first quarter of the 2nd century B. C., if not to a still earlier date.

Moreover, Vātsyāyana has not quoted a single line from the literature of the first three centuries after Christ, but all his quotations were evidently derived from the works that appeared before 400 B. C.. As Prof. Batuknath Bhattacharjee cogently remarks: “It seems a little remarkable that Vātsyāyana should not have mentioned any of his predecessors more contiguous to his own date, but should have looked so far back as to the 4th century B. C.”. Unfortunately Mr. Chakladar has tried to evade the issues raised by Prof. Bhattacharjee. His argument based upon the admission of Vātsyāyana himself that the culture of erotic knowledge in the country was very near extinction (उत्सन्नकालमभूत्) when he took up his pen, and that he had to fall back on the ancient text of Bābhavya to compile his work, shows that there was a slight break in the continuity of study of this

important science, though in the meantime Gonārdiya, Gonika-putra, Dattaka and others had forged a few feeble links in the chain in their own ways.

If Bābhavya had flourished before 600 B. C. and granted that Vātsyāyana lived between 3rd and 2nd century B. C., is not a span of 400 years, specially at an age when the people were passing through great religious and political upheavals, internecine feuds, foreign invasions and above all, diverse newer avenues of knowledge, deemed sufficient to the cause the study of the *Kāmasutra* gradually to fall into decay? Is it at all necessary to drag Vātsyāyana another five or six rungs of centuries down the ladder simply for the fault of his remarking somewhere in the book that the science was fast deteriorating when he set the hand to it? Anyway we are very little concerned with the precise date of Vātsyāyana and his monumental monograph, and would better keep ourselves aloof from the surging debates of the two opposing schools. Without any attempt at forcing our own conviction on the learned readers, the best part we can play is to patch up a compromise between the two schools of thought for our present purpose, i. e. by taking third or second century B. C. as the date of the original work of *Kāmasutra* and third century A. D. as the closing date of its slight additions and emendations.

As we have already remarked at the opening of this chapter, that Vātsyāyana with his wonderfully captious eye had found ample opportunities to study the manners and customs of the different types of people of this vast sub-continent, is evinced from his very work. Most of his observations will here stand us in good stead. Thus he says that in Madhyadesa (the Gangā-Jamunā doab from the south of Kurukshetra down up to Allāhābād) the people are of sober character, and the women of this vast tract of land dislike biting, scratching with nails and mouth-kissing during the sexual union. This aversion to the kissing and biting was due not to the sincere abomination of these frolics which in fact every woman by nature likes to go in for, not to speak of the man, but to the fear of contracting "*uchchhista*" (i. e. contamination by spittle from another's mouth which may carry germs of various diseases). Whereas in Madhyadesha the

fear of mere contamination by sucking and biting kept away the women from the noble enjoyment of kissing, in another part of India the people practised *Auparishtaka* (*Fellatio* or oral coitus) with the energy of Zoilus, Maleager and Tiberius. These practices, which according to Thoinot & Weysee, are merely "the analogues of those somewhat perverse refinements found in normal relations," were in Vātsyāyana's time resorted to by prostitutes, libertines and servant women, specially by those engaged in shampooing.

This corrupt practice was little known in India\* before it came in contact with foreign influence i. e. before the fifth century B. C., when the Persians extended their suzerainty upto the bank of the Indus under Emperor Darius. We are not positive whether *fellatio* was widely practised by the Persians or the Greeks. But it has been definitely ascertained that the Romans went crazy over it long before the Emperors. The public baths at Rome served as the hot-bed of the worst forms of debauchery among which *fellatio* may be counted as one. The *fellatrices* had no abhorrence for indiscriminately lending their mouths to the ignoble satisfaction of their lovers. These women taught their accursed art even to the children and slave-girls known as *fellatores*. This practice became at one time so widespread in the greater portion of Italy that a satirist exclaimed with justified petulance: "Oh noble descendents of the goddess Venus! You will soon be able to find no lips that are virtuous enough to address your prayers to her!" Martial in his epigrams curses and detests these *fellatores* in his naively scathing language, specially those that earned their living solely by this abominable practice. He has, for instance, at one place thrown his invectives on a *fellatrice* named Thais: "There is no one among the people

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\* Yājñavalkya and a few other law-givers have mentioned विद्योनिमैद्युज्ज and अद्योनिमैद्युज्ज, the former probably signifying "pederasty" and the latter "extra-vaginal intercourse", and have codified punishments for these vicious practices; but they have nowhere specifically mentioned *fellatio*, though it can justly be included in the last-named offence. It should be remembered in this connection that the *Saṃhitas* in question were written sometime after India came in touch with the Persian and the Greeks.

of this city who can boast of having had the favours of Thais, though many have desired her and many have even purchased them. Why then is Thais so chaste ? It is because her mouth is not chaste (*Tam casta est, rogo, Thais ? immos fellat*).“... This frightful manifestation of lust became so notoriously diffused under the Emperors that “Plautus and Terence who allude to the vice of the *fellatores*, seem by comparison to have nothing to say about it.”

Now, if the Greeks had not already been in the know of it, they must have contracted the habit from their Roman neighbours before the time of Macedonian supremacy ; or the invading army of Alexander must have learnt it from the people of Asia Minor or Persia and disseminated it all the way across the Hindukush and along the banks of the Indus and the Hydaspes. This is proved by the fact that the practice prevailed only in those parts of India where the foreign influence was brought to bear upon the greatest. Vātsyāyana explicitly mentions that the people of Eastern India do not resort to such women as lend their mouths to the practice of *Auparishtaka*\*. The people of Ahichhatra† although go to this class of women, they seldom press for *fellatio*. The people of Saketa are rather fond of *fellatio* ; whereas those of Nagara (in the present Jaipur state) do not practise this on their own initiative. The people of Surasena country on the southern

\* The chapter entitled “Auparishtaka” appears as extraneous in Vātsyāyana’s book. In his time the practice did not possibly take deep root in Indian soil nor did it send forth helicoid ramifications all around so much so that a separate chapter would have been necessary to deal effectively with it. The seed that had likely been sown by Alexander’s forces must have shewed signs of germination after the inroads of Demetrius and Menander. The practice decisively reached its culminating point in the second or third century A. D., when India had already acquainted itself with the Roman manner through commercial relations, and when Philostratus in his famous romance brought Apollonius of Tyana over to this country. During Vātsyāyana’s life-time, *Auparishtaka* was only gaining ground, and even if he had at all given a form to this chapter, it is almost certain that it has been freely amplified and remodelled by the succeeding editors.

† Ahichhatra was the capital of North Pāṇchāla, now a ruined site, bearing the same name near the village of Rāmgarh in the Bareilly District, U.P.

bank of Jamunā, practise all the perversions without the least hesitation.

The Surasenas, we may remember, occupied the land round about the city of Mathura which was the capital of their kingdom. As far as can be elicited from Vātsyāyana's description of their lives with a special reference to their prostitutes, it seems that the latter were very much degraded from the ideal conduct that erstwhile characterised them. This fall was undoubtedly the outcome of foreign domination. Mathura had been temporarily occupied by the Greeks in the early years of the 2nd century and subsequently ruled over by the Saka Satraps. As is always the case, the foreign soldiers are the most liberal patronisers of the local prostitutes ; and no wonder that these women ever eager to serve the pleasures of their customers according to their taste and temperament, should imbibe this perverse form of sexual gratification from the Greek and other foreign settlers.

The Surasenas put forth funny argument in favour of this practice. They said, as Vātsyāyana records, that no one could be certain about the character, conduct, practices, creditability and utterances of women. By nature they were unclean, although they were not to be repudiated on that account. The ancient law-givers had ordained that the udder of a cow even if it has been sucked by its calf is to be thought pure at the time of milking. Again a dog is to be deemed clean when he seizes a deer in hunting. A bird must be taken as unsoiled when it pecks at a fruit and causes it to fall on the ground. And the mouth of a woman is to be held undefiled and good for any form of endearments at the time of sexual congress.\*..... The fashionable people of Saketa were worse than the Surasenas, inasmuch as they even quoted scriptures in support of their *Auparishtakal* practice. This place also was somewhat influenced by foreign invasion.

It is significant to note that at first the public women would not willingly bring themselves to the catering of this loathsome form of pleasure ; and the term *Auparishtaka* originally

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\* *Kamasutra*, Śāṃ, Ch. IX, Ss. 25-26.

meant "sexual gratification effected by man only in the mouth of a male or a female eunuch (द्वौषा प्रकृतिः)" The female eunuchs used to exhibit all the habits and manners of a public woman and earn their livelihood necessarily by prostituting all other parts of their body than the legitimate one that was lacking in them. It was they who first absorbed this vile custom, as by these means not only could they satisfy their exotic customers, but derived vicariously some sort of sexual gratification themselves. When other prostitutes and lecherous servant-women found out that they were losing customers owing to this foreign perversity being pandered to by the eunuchs, they gradually got themselves inured to it.

Of the North and North-western portion of India Vātsyāyana ventures the assertion that adventurous citizens amongst the people of the Himālayas used to bribe the sentinels and enter the seraglio of respectable persons to enjoy the harem-ladies clandestinely. Bāhlika is also included in the northern division. The ladies of this country like the women of Madhyadesa and Avanti were apparently of decent habits and were free from sexual perversions. But this seems to be a palpable prevarication from the truth, as the picture painted of the Bāhlikas and the Madrakas in the Mahābhārata could hardly have lost colour within the course of a few centuries, specially when they had continuously been subjected to the Persian and Greek domination since the time of Darius and Alexander's eastern expeditions\*.

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\* Here Vātsyāyana has mentioned Bāhlika side by side and in the same breath with Avanti, as if both the kingdoms were contiguous ; but as everybody knows, there was hundreds of miles' distance between these two kingdoms. Probably there has been some discrepancy in copying the word 'Bāhlika' from the original manuscript or an inaccuracy in reading it, which might have, at any rate, meant the *Vatsas*, the *Vairatas*, or more likely the *Bahukas* (people inhabiting both sides of the river under this name), completely unrelated to the Bāhlikas. The Bāhlikas or Bāhikas inhabited that tongue-shaped portion of the North-western Province which lay north of Kabul River probably from the present Abottābād to Chārikar. At the time of the Epics, it was only a small territory west of modern Kashmir (then Kekaya or Uttara-Madra) which was annexed by King Śalya. During the Buddhist period, the Madra kingdom receded in importance and its boundary was reduced to the narrow doab between the rivers Ravi and Chenub. Thereafter the Bāhlika and

These people, we have reasons to believe, have never been innocuous in regard to all forms of sexual aberrations. There was, however, one peculiar custom obtaining amongst them at the time, which Vātsyāyana himself touches on in another passage. A single woman in this land used to marry several young men one after the other and they enjoyed the same position here as the harem-ladies in other lands. These drones of husbands were allowed caresses of their common polyandrous wife either singly or in batches at a time.

Whereas in the Bāhlika region the woman used to marry several men, in the country of Grāmanāri and Strirāja rich women maintained in their respective harems a number of youths as their kept paramours. The Kāmasutra writes in this connection ; "The woman engages these youths, either severally or conjointly in the act of sexual intercourse, who please her with their various amorous acts according to her inclinations. When a number of them are engaged to satisfy their mistress, one of them takes her on his lap (she lying across), while another sucks her lips ; the third begins the conjugation of sexual bliss and the

Gāndhāra boundary-lines also fluctuated every now and then, and at last merged into the Greek eastern empire. The people inhabiting these parts of India including Kapisi in the north-west (modern Kāfiristan), Strirāja in the far north and Madra in the east were roughly known as Bāhlabeyas, Bāhliyas, Bāhlikas or Bāhikas by the people of other Indian states before and after Vātsyāyana lived.

A great part of this country seems to have laboured under Iranian predominance for many years since the early Epic, and in the age under review the people here may be recognised as preponderantly Indo-Iranian—somewhat alienated from the pure Indo-Aryan type. Prof. Chakladar has tried to show that the Bāhikas and Bāhlikas were not one and the same, and their lands were distinctly separate. But the Mahābharata has used both the words to denote one and the same people. If this was a mistake as Prof. Chakladar would have it, it is strange that Nīlkantha too in his glossography on the Mahābharata should have committed the same mistake. Bāhika, we believe, was nothing but the Pali form of Bāhlika, and every student of comparative philology knows that Pali always aims at avoiding hard consonantal combinations of Sanskrit. This learned professor's another attempt to identify Bāhlika country with Bactria of the Greeks and present Balkh of N. Afghanistan has, we are afraid, been as erratic as erroneous in that no archeologist of known repute could prove to satisfaction that the boundaries of the Bāhlika kingdom ever crossed the Hindukush mountains in the north or went beyond the Greek Paropanisadae.

fourth presses her hips sometimes inflicting cuts with nails or teeth. They repeat these acts by turns until their mistress is thoroughly satisfied." In these lands courtesans also entertained in a similar manner a large number of lovers, all of whom simultaneously enjoyed her body in different poses and from different vantage-points.

The women of Strirājya went another step forward, and employed artificial means and methods for the satisfaction of their *libido sexualis*. The women of Kośala also were addicted to this vice\*. There is much dispute over the actual geographical situation of the land of the amazons. But from the *Brihat Samhita* of Varahamihira and *Rajatarangini* of Kalhana, it appears that this Strirājya was situated somewhere about the North-western frontier of India beyond the Himālayas and that it was contiguous to the kingdoms of the Tushāras, the Madras and the Bāhlikas and near about the Muzavanta Mountains (an off-shoot of modern Muztagh or Karakorum range?). Prof. Chakladar also lends support to this view.†

The country washed by the six rivers, viz. Vipāsā, Saṭadrū, Irāvati, Chandrabhāgā, Viṭastā and Sindhu, i. e. almost the whole of modern Punjab, the women were much in favour of *fellatio*, though they were none the less fond of normal kissing, hugging etc. The women belonging to Aparāntika and Lātya ‡ according to Vātsayāyana, are highly passionate, but can little put up with the sadistic components of love. Aparāntika was no doubt the modern North Koncan or the central portion of the Bombay Presidency (vide Kalidasa's *Raghuvamśa*, 4 : 58). The land of the Lātas has been placed in the Northern Gujrat including a small fraction of Sind and the Baroda State.

\* इदं प्रहरण योगिन्यः खरवेगा एव अपद्रव्यप्रधानाः स्त्रीराज्ये कोशलायां च ॥

—*Kamsutra*, (Benares edition), p. 126 & (Iyenger's Edition) pp. 70, 27.

† *Social Life in Ancient India*, pp. 58-62.

‡ There were eight generally accepted places where kisses could be administered, viz. forehead, fringe of frontal hair, cheeks, eyes, chest, breasts, lips and oral orifice; but Vātsayāyana says, the Lātas added three more to the list: the inguinal region, the axillary region and the place about the navel. [Vide *Samprayogikadhikaranam*, Ch. III. 44.]



Then Vātsyāyana comes to study the character of the women of *Prachya* or eastern division i. e. the vast tract of land lying east, north-east and south-east of Allāhābād including the kingdoms of Anga, Vanga, Kalinga and some other smaller principalities. Here in some places, the harems of the aristocracy were nice breeding places of romantic love-intrigues; a number of harem women—nine or ten in number would join hands and hide a common lover in a secret nook of the palace. A sort of temporary marriage (being valid for a year) between citizens and courtezans' daughters was a recognised mode in these places\*. The amatory usages and episodes of Anga, Vanga and Kalinga royal harems have been alluded to by the learned author of the *Kamasutra*, which says that the Brāhmins of the city under the colour of bestowing flowers to the queens and king's concubines used to enter the heart of the harems and talked to them from behind the curtains which often led to the closest relationship†.

Gauda is several times mentioned by Vātsyāyana. Probably in his time Gauda was a separate kingdom as distinguished from Vanga, though it was preponderantly inhabited by the Bengali race. It comprised almost the whole of Northern Bengal including greater portions of the modern districts of Purneah and Dārbbhānga probably with a small part of West-Assam. Even during the reigns of the Pāl and Sen dynasty, "Gauda-Vanga" has often been conjointly used to signify a kingdom, the boundary of which almost tallies with that of the modern province of Bengal. The practice in both the Vanga and the Gauda kingdoms was virtually the same, though Vātsyāyana mentions in a separate passage that the harem-inmates of the latter place carried on intrigues with the Brāhmins, friends and relatives of the kings, servants, couriers, pages etc‡. The author in two

\* पाण्डित्यव्यस्य स'वत्सरमव्यभिचार्योक्तौ यथाकामिनौ स्यात् ॥

— *Kamasutra* (Benares ed.) p. 365.

† *Kamasutra*, R. lyenger's edition, 178 : 41 ; also Burton's translation (1883) p. 235.

‡ ब्राह्मणैर्मित्रैश्चैर्दासैश्चैव गौडायाम् ॥

— *Ibid*, Pāradārikādhikaranam, Ch. VI, S. 12.

other passages of his books alludes to the æsthetic taste of the men and good breeding of the women of the Gauda country. The latter were sweet in their speech, tender in their love and delicate in their bodies\*.

The kings in the eastern division in those days were, no doubt, very obliging to their passionate wives who were often a great many in number, in as much as he went in unto all of them every night with an artificial penis tucked up in the proper place simply to satisfy their lust and in spite of his own lack of "tumescence". But, as a matter of course, he acted the real lover without any attempt at simulation on his part with those on whom his mind was invariably set on that particular night or who keenly desired intercourse with him with all her best dress and ornaments on or who were just off from their monthly flow†.

The Deccan or South India is designated by Vātsyāyana sometimes as *Dakshināpatha* and at other as *Dakshinātya*. Here at the time of Vātsyāyana, the Andhras who originally inhabited the region between the rivers Godāvary and Krishnā had already extended their conquests from sea to sea and were persistently pushing their boundaries across the river Narmadā under the Sātāhānas. The Chola, Pāndyas and Cheras or Keralas were ruling uninterruptedly in the further south as ever. In four or five passages Vātsyāyana has had occasion to refer to the kings and people of the *Dakshināpatha*. For the first time we come across in his work the peculiar custom of circumcision like the Jews and Mahomedans amongst these Dravidian people‡. The custom of marriage with the daughter of maternal uncle is also mentioned, which still prevails amongst

\* *Kamasutra*, M. Paul's edition, Sāmpayogikādhikaranam, Ch. V, S. 33.

† राजानश्च कृपाशीला विनापि भावेयोगादायोजितापद्रव्या यावदर्थमेकया रात्रा बह्वीरपि गच्छन्ति । यस्यां तु प्रीतिर्वासकाच्छतुर्वा तत्राभिप्रायतः प्रवर्तन्ते इति प्राच्योपचाराः ॥

—*Ibid*, Pārādārikādhikaranam, Ch. VI, S. 4.

‡ दाक्षिणात्यानां शिङ्गस्य कण्ठेयोरिवव्यधनं बालस्य ॥

—*Ibid*, Benares edition, p. 374.

some castes of South India. Here the people were fond of delivering artistic strokes to their women during amorous sports—an expression of violent passion and sadistic temperament. The women, says the author as if from his personal observation and experience, bore the marks of such violence all over the body; and unfortunately in some cases the men in their blind frenzy had administered such fatal “love-blows” to their partners as to have killed them forthwith thereby. Malayavati, the chief queen of the Andhra King, Kuntala Satakarni, for instance, could not withstand such a diabolic stroke on the head by her royal spouse and had to die in consequence\*. A Chola king, killed a courtesan named Chitrasenā by a similar stroke on the chest which in the technical language of the *Kamasutra* is called a “Kila”. A wedge-like stroke called “Viddha” aimed by Naradeva, a general of the Pāndya army, at the cheek of a dancing girl, missed its mark with the result that she had to lose an eye.

There was, moreover, the evil practice of anal coitus amongst the Southerners†. It is hardly credible that this was widely practised by all the decorous people on their legitimate wives. This form of perversion was probably more frequent amongst the Southern people than the Northern, but it was given countenance to almost exclusively by the wretched libertines, prostitutes and women of negotiable virtue. In the Andhra land, many women were used to that particular kind of coition called “Bāḍavaka” which consisted in holding the male organ tightly compressed within the folds of the *labia minora* like the littoral mare (बड़वा)‡. In another

\* This is one of the two singular passages which have formed the basis of contention for the Chakradar School to bring the date of *Kamasutra* after the 2nd century A. D. As we have already estimated, this illustrative passage could have easily been foisted in by a subsequent editor or a manuscript-scribe at a time when the calumny of Kuntala Satakarni had just taken air.

† अधोरतं पायावपि दाक्षिणात्यानाम् ॥

—*Kamasutra*, M. Paul's edition, p. 573.

‡ बड़वेव निष्ठरमवटङ्गीयादिति बाड़वकमाभ्यासिकम् । तदाभ्युप ॥

—*Ibid*, Sāmprayogikādhikaranam,

Ch. VI, Ss. 19-20; Ch. VIII, S. 15; vide also Jasodharendra's commentary on them.

passage, Vātsyāyana certifies that the Andhra women in general were moderately passionate, but their tastes were sullied and their habits impure\*. There was a reprehensible usage in this country which demanded of every householder to send his daughter on the tenth day of her marriage to the king's private chamber with some presents and to have her relished by him†.

An almost identical custom is said to have been prevailing in Berar (Vidarbha), Aparāntaka, Saurāshtra and other western districts. The ambitious and winsome wives of the Berar citizens voluntarily went to the royal seraglio with the full 'knowledge of their guardians and shared his couch with ostensible pleasure for a fortnight or a month at a stretch. In this very kingdom the harem-ladies in some cases unscrupulously entered into incestuous relationship even with their step-sons. The youths here were equally unprincipled in that they never desisted from casting their lustful glances on any women, related or unrelated, save and except their mothers‡. Vatsagulma, a flourishing town in Vidarbha§, had been for many years the favourite haunt of the pleasure-seeking aristocrats like modern Monte-Carlo of Europe. It festered in inconceivable license and libertinage in the age under our consideration. The life of the harem-ladies was rotten to the core; owing to the strict vigilance of the palace-guards, the sons of citizens with whom they were in intimate communication had to enter the harem under the guise of, and accompanied by, the royal maid-servants. The beautiful wives of the high state-officers were brought away into the king's bed-chamber to spend the night with him. The Aparāntika people likewise sent their good-

\* *Ibid*, Samp., Ch. V., S. 28.

† प्रसा जनपदकन्या दशमेऽहनि किञ्चिदौपायनिकमुपगच्छ प्रविश्यत्यःपुरमुपभुक्ता एव विस्तृत्यन्त इत्यान्वृत्ताम् ॥

—*Ibid*, Pāradārikādhikāranam, Ch. V, S. 19.

‡ स्त्रीरेव पुत्रीरन्तःपुराणि कामचारैर्जननीवर्जमुपयुज्यन्ते वैदर्भाकाणाम् ॥

—*Ibid*, Ch. VI. S. 13.

§ तत्रास्ति मनोजन्मनो देवस्य स्त्रीषाबासो विदर्भेषु वत्सगुलमानस नगरम् ॥

—Rājasekhara's *Kavyamimamsa*, p. 10.

looking wives to the ministers, high officers and the king to win their favour. In the land about Southern Kāthiawād, Vātsyāyana observed a similar abuse ; in deference to the royal wish, city women were admitted into the palace singly or in batches, to yield the king a variety of venereal pleasure\*. The royal prerogative to enjoy the wife, newly wedded or otherwise, of any of his citizens and officials, was not the peculiar characteristic of South India alone ; every student of ethnology knows that the loathsome "right of prelibation," otherwise known as *jus primæ noctis*, continued for several centuries was often taken advantage of by the emperors, kings, princes, dukes, cardinals, bishops etc. of Italy, France and England†.

Side by side with Mālava (Malwa), the Ābhīrakas are mentioned in the *Kāmasutra*. They originally inhabited the south-western border of modern Rājputana, and being generally of a marauding nature, frequently overran northern Gujrat, South Punjab and the eastern Rājputana as far as the Avanti frontier, till with the progress of time and civilisation they settled peacefully around the whole of southern half of Rājputana upto Madhyamika and also in Northern Gujrat extending to the shores of the Rann of Cutch. They were principally of Vaiśya caste‡, but during the Scythian ascendancy and admixture, most of them changed themselves into Kshatriyas. In Vātsyāyana's time, Kshatriyas from the neighbouring lands were employed in large numbers in the seraglio of the king and nobles, as they were believed to be truer to their salt and less unprincipled in their moral bearing than the Ābhīras themselves. Still the harem-ladies were sometimes

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\* *Kāmasutra*, M. Paul's edition, p. 432—433.

† "A *jus primæ noctis* (right to the first night) has also existed and will sometimes exist in some tribes ; but this right is reserved for the chiefs, kings or priests, and allows them to have sexual intercourse before the husband with every newly married woman during the first night of the nuptials. This is a barbarous custom based on the right of the stronger, and analogous to the privileges claimed by the European nobles from their serfs or peasants."—August Forel's *The Sexual Question*, p. 151.

‡ Though from a diction of Patanjali, it is known that the Ābhīras or Ābhīrakas were Śūdras by caste. [ Vide Kielhorn, *Mahabhasya*, I, 252, "Ind. Anti." 1918, p. 36 ]. Probably he has confused the Ābhīras with the aboriginal tribe called Bhīlas who inhabited the mountainous region of the Āravallī.

found to be in terms with the Kshatriya *ministerialis palatinus*\*. Illicit love is supposed to have been running rampant among all classes of Ābhīras in Vātsyāyana's age. Kottarāja, an Ābhīra chief, had formed a liaison with the wife of a rich merchant named Sresthī Vasumitra. One night when he was stealthily entering her private apartments, he was seized and assassinated by a washerman employed for the purpose by the king's brother who had a pretension to the throne.

Amongst the different races and tribes of various kingdoms in South India, the author of the *Kāmasūtra* alludes to the sexual characteristics of the Drāviḍas, the Vānavasikas and the Mahārāshtrikas. Vanavāsa was the chief town of a small kingdom in and around the modern North Kanara district in Bombay Presidency. The kingdom was then known as Vaijayantī. The ladies of Vanavāsa were moderately passionate, though they could stand different forms of caress by a suitable person. The women here were very tactful in keeping the defects of their body concealed even from their lovers. On the other hand, they were given to casting slurs on, and cracking jokes with, others ; but anyway they avoided uncharitable remarks and obscene talks. The Marhatta women, although patronisers of the sixty-four arts, were fond of indecent jokes and contumelious words. They were always aggressive in matters of love and sometimes forced men to have connection with them §. In another place, Vātsyāyana makes an appreciative study of the nails of the Mahārāshtrikas *pari passu* with those of the Gaudas. He also adds that the sexual fervency of the former travels midway between two extremes, though at suitable places and times it can be made to attain either extreme.

Vātsyāyana has but once mentioned the Saindhavas, the people of Sindhudeśa or modern Sind, in a single solitary passage that appertains to the lewdness of the harem-ladies. The janitors and artisans had, as a matter of course, free access to the royal

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\* अविद्यसंश्रुतैरनुरक्तिभिरेवायं साधयन्त्याभीरकम् ॥—*Kāmasūtra*, p. 443.

§ सकल चतुषष्टिः प्रयोगरागिण्योऽङ्गीकृतवद्ववाक्यप्रियाः शयने च सरभक्षोपक्रान्ता महाराष्ट्रिकाः ॥—*Ibid*, Sāmprayogikādhikaranam, Ch. V, S. 29.

seraglio, and they were often invited to the couch of the king's women who seldom felt any abhorrence to give themselves up to men of such inferior status\*.

Vātsyāyana has touched upon or spoken at some length of almost all the principal races of this vast country ; but it is doubtful whether he himself travelled all through out India and made a personal note of these people to derive a first hand knowledge of their character. Most likely he had to depend much upon the hearsays, the local traditions and the contemporary or anterior literature available to him. From all the evidences that his book can supply us with, it appears that he was a native of the North Punjab, and probably belonged to the Vātsya line of Takshasīla. Vātsyāyana was evidently his patronymic surname derived from his *gotranāma* ; and some authorities have supposed that his real or first-name was Mallanāga†. Chānakya or Kautilya, Chandragupta's minister and Bānabhatta, author of *Harshacharita*, also belonged to this great Brahmin lineage. Sometime before Chānakya, a scion of the family had migrated to Magadha. It is, however, difficult to establish that Mallanāga Vātsyāyana belonged to any family of the Magadhan settlers. To whatever place his birth may be ascribed, it is plain to presume that he had visited the important towns of Kōśala, Madhyadeśa and Magadha to collect the old manuscripts of Bābhavya, Chārāyana, Dattaka and others who are all supposed to have been natives of these places. But Vātsyāyana's itinerary observations did not extend beyond the boundaries of Pātaliputra in the east, and he hardly has acquired any personal knowledge of the people of Anga, Vanga, Gauda and Kalinga. But he "appears to have been acquainted more thoroughly with South-western India" and also that portion of Central India which at that moment tended to pass over under the Andhra yoke.

\* *Op. cit.* Pāradātikādhikaranam, (Iyenger's edition), p. 178.

† स जोपायं विना न भवतीति तनुपायमापि ख्यासुराचार्यमङ्गनामः पूर्व्वार्थमन्तानु-  
सारेण शास्त्रमिदं प्रणीतवान् ॥

Most of his records of harem-scandals were presumably based on popular rumours current in his time and second-hand reports. And the first-hand knowledge which he gathered of the sexual proclivities of different classes and races of people, were not often, as we strongly suspect, the result of such close and persistent observation as would warrant the making of sweeping generalisations. As regards *fellatio*, *cunnilinctus*, *coitus per anum* and other scandalous practices which he has sometimes with a hasty judgment attributed to all men and women of a particular land, they were, we have reasons to believe, mostly favoured by a set of perverted libertines, loose women and prostitutes of the C<sub>3</sub> class. It was not easy in those days, as it is even now, to feel the pulse of a whole race of people—far less to make a precisely correct reading of the sexual temperament of a debonair and cultured society, for a sojourning stranger, howsoever intelligent an observer he might prove himself to be. Notwithstanding all this, Vātsyāyana's informations regarding the habits and private lives of the most of the kings and nobles of the time can be taken as essentially true in as much as from the time of the Epic the moral laxity of the royalty had been remarkably waxing. The author was indubitably more familiar with the people of the Punjab, the Bāhlika, the Strirāja and other adjoining hill districts, amongst whom he seems to have spent some part of his life, and consequently the treatment of their modes and manners has been more faithful than the others.

From the second century B.C. to the third century A.D. to which we have deliberately assigned the age of Vātsyāyana along with his emendators and interpolators, different parts of India was passing through great political changes with the rise of new powers and the fall of old as well as the consolidation of conquest by strange invaders. The Sakas, the Kushānas and the Palhavas (Parthians) pitched their banners in a major portion of North and Western India. The Sunga and Kanva dynasty that successively ruled North India, passed out of sight one after the other a few years before the advent of the Christian era. Time-



honoured customs, economic conditions and political institutions underwent modifications, more or less, at the hands of foreign administrators. The custom of *Suttee* received a far greater impetus and found a wider scope than before through the Saka influence\*. The Sakas and Kushānas, on the contrary, became mostly Hinduised, swelling the number of Kshatriya caste as their names ending in *Varman* and *Datta* invariably suggest, and the rest embraced Buddhism, thus merging themselves irretrievably into the people they governed. Northern India could not throw off this *quasi*-foreign yoke till the rise of the Gupta dynasty at about 320 A.D., and the Western India till the end of the fourth century.

During this long period, nevertheless, the life and status of the *vesyās* and *ganikās* underwent little changes worth the name. The *ganika* was an indispensable and estimable factor in all public functions of the town as well as in the life of the aristocracy. The age of Vātsyāyanā was characterised by a high æsthetic refinement and considerable progress in all branches of art and literature. Wealth and riches, milk and honey were flowing profusely in the country through extensive trade with the far eastern and western countries including Java, Sumatra, Cambodia and China on one hand and Mesopotamia, Arabia, Egypt and Rome on the other. In spite of the political vicissitudes, the life of the average citizen was on the whole tranquil and easy-going, and poverty was but limited to a negligible handful. The materialistic prosperity in abundance was responsible for the formation of a class of people who

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\* The idea of *Suttee* never crossed the Indian mind before the third or fourth century B. C.. Onesicritus definitely speaks of it as a peculiar custom of the "Cathaeans" (Scythians). Long after this, when most of the Scythians settled in India as Kshatriyas, the custom for a time was only delimited to them. The Greeks had a theory to account for the origin of this custom. The theory which might be one of their plausible concoctions gives out that formerly wives in high life had been so apt to get rid of their husbands by administering poison etc. that the kings had to introduce a law compelling the widow or widows to be burnt along with her or their dead husband. [see *Strabo* XV, 700 ; *Diod.*, XIX, 33.]

revised their ideals of life in terms of *Artha* (money) and *Kāma* (sexual enjoyment), having obviously thrown *Dharma* into the background. Buddhistic stoicism went a long way in giving a reactionary incentive to the rapid crystallisation of this newer ideal, which like the Epicurean doctrine sought 'to eat, drink and be merry' as long as there was lustre of life within. The *Laukayatikas*, as the people wedded to this cult were called, used to put forth the reasoning that religious austerities need little be observed, as the fruits of such practices are but prospective and all the more doubtful and uncertain; who would want to be foolish enough to give away to others what he has in his hands with a view to receiving some future reward! It is better to be a pigeon to-day than a peacock to-morrow, better to have a copper-token that is sure than a golden coin that is uncertain\*.

This hedonistic philosophy had drawn many of the city-people irrespective of their caste, traditional creed or religion, to the gross materialistic side of life. Courtezans came in the midst of it to act as a centripetal inspiration. The citizens who had a liberal education and refined tastes, always clustered round these gilded mirrors of beauty to find a reflection of their own mind in them. They were favoured—nay ardently desired and adequately esteemed, by all shades of opinion—from the kingship to the curacy. The girls of a family during the Vedic and Epic ages were generally married after having attained their puberty and received a fairly all-round education. But in Vātsyāyana's time, they were married rather earlier and found very little time and opportunity to attain such state of proficiency in the literature and arts as the average *ganika*. Few girls were sent to the public schools, though a rudimentary sort of technical education with a special stress on her potential duties as a housewife, was imparted to every girl

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\* न धर्माच्चयरेत् । एष्यत्फलत्वात् । सांशयिकत्वाच्च ॥ कीं क्षत्रालिशो हस्तगतं परगतं  
 क्षुर्यात् ॥ वरमय कपोतः श्वो मयूरात् ॥ वरं सांशयिकान्निष्कादसांशयिकः कार्षापणः इति  
 लौकायतिकाः ॥—*Kamasutra*, Sādhāranamādhikaranam, Ch. II. Ss. 21-23.

by the guardians before her marriage. "Then again, the wedded wife on account of her manifold duties in the household, could not cultivate the arts as thoroughly as she would like to." But in aristocratic families and amongst the rich liberal-minded Kshatriyas, the maidens did always receive a higher education in the *Kālas*. The *ganikas*, nevertheless, could not be outdone in all kinds of educational qualifications by any virgins or matrons in those days. Hence the author of *Lalitavistara*—a product of this age, made King Suddhodhana remark that he wanted for his son, Siddhārtha, a bride who would be as accomplished in all branches of art as a courtesan\*.

Bharata who is supposed to have flourished at this period has given a nice portrait of an ideal *ganikā* in his *Nāṭya-sāstra* (Dramaturgy). He says, "A woman who knows the practical and timely application of various arts, who has a thorough knowledge of the science and literature; who is well-versed in the sixty-four recognised *kālas* and particularly in dancing to the accompaniment of music; whose conduct is marked by a respect to the superiors (in age, social status, riches, learning etc), by graceful and engaging deportments, by lively gestures and luscious blandishments; who possesses strength of mind and tenacity of purpose, punctuated with a sense of delicacy and sweetness of temper; who is free from the characteristic drawbacks of the average woman; who speaks sparklingly with a clarity of expression; who can work intelligently without getting easily fatigued—is then to be designated a *ganikā*†.

Courtesans who conformed strictly to this definition were not scarce. They had from their very childhood to attend public schools called *Gandharvasālās* to diligently learn the sixty-four arts subsidiary to the highest technical knowledge of erotics. The course was as long and difficult to pursue as it was expensive. If a courtesan's daughter could

\* शास्त्रे विद्विज्जकुशला गणिका यथैव ॥—*Lalitavistara* (Lefmann's edition), XII, 139.

† *Bharatiya Nāṭyaśāstra*. Ch. XXIV.

come out with honours or distinction, and if she had a touch of Rambhā or Tillottamā on her person, she might be cordially received into the king's harem; otherwise she would hang up the tablet of her "estimably ignoble" profession, which hardly needed any wide publicity or a term of probation. A small fraction of them even went to the stage, if it held out better prospects. Vātsyāyana certifies that these actresses (*ikshanikas*) were very deft carriers of love-messages\*. In any case and under all circumstances, the lot of the *ganikas* were far better than that of the ordinary prostitutes. There were many people of strong moral calibre who although evidently despised them for the life they led, treated them with a spirit of toleration on the score of their high intellectual acquirements.

The Indian hetairæ were frequently invited by respectable citizens and members of the corporations to the religious festivities, private dramatic performances, various social gatherings (clubs)†, literary conferences etc., either as witnesses or to actively take part in them. The author of the *Kāmasutra* has given descriptions of the garden-parties and holiday-excursions of those days. Every rich and respectable citizen had then a garden (with a small well-furnished house and one or two well-kept tanks) outside, but not very far from, the city. Early in the morning a company of friends would set out for the garden mounted on horse-back, accompanied by a batch of courtesans and followed by a few servants with the necessary paraphernalia. There they would pass the whole day in feasting, drinking, singing, dancing, sporting in the artificial lakes and in games of chance or diverting themselves with the fights of cocks, quails or rams. In the evening they would return to the town

\* *Kāmasutra*, Benares edition, pp. 280, 366.

† "At these gatherings were invited *ganikas* or brilliant artists who by their education and knowledge of the arts, could please the *nagaraka* (citizen) by meeting him on his own ground. viz., in mental and æsthetic culture, and who therefore loved and honoured by the people. Sometimes the parties were held at the house of one of the *ganikas*."...

—*Studies in Vatsyayana's Kāmasutra*, p. 165.

wearing some pleasant tokens serving as remembrance of the picnic, such as a bunch of flowers or a small twig from the garden-trees\*. The *Udyanayatras* by which these garden-parties were then known, were sometimes arranged and taken part in by the ladies and young girls. By-the-bye Vātsyāyana remarks that these excursions often afforded opportunities to the women to make or receive offers of secret love ; it was on her way to the garden that a virgin was sometimes snatched away from the company of her friends or relatives for the purpose of marriage†. Courtship and marriage by abduction was, however, not so very common in those days, and even widow-remarriage and levirate were fast falling into disuse.

The *ganikas* seem to have their own clubs, guilds and associations, from which they could raise a concerted voice and through which they could ventilate a common grievance. They framed such rules and regulations here as would guide their daily life and ensure their future prospects. From the common funds of the association they would help their sick and needy sisters. The Indian courtesan, no doubt, knew how best to extricate money from the lovers ; but she never hoarded it assiduously like a miser for the thieves or her spendthrift children. She also knew how best to put her earnings to use. Sometimes, of course, a major part of these went towards her luxurious up-keep, yet a certain portion was always set apart for charitable purposes. Conventionality of religion had still a strong hold on the people and specially on all classes of prostitutes who shewed a special aptitude for its observance. They regularly made rich offerings to the numerous temples that had been raising their domes and pinacles all over the country ; they gave costly alms equally to the Buddhist *Sramans* as well as the Hindu Brāhmins. The *ganikas* actuated by a desire for public good considered it as the highest gain to themselves if they could scrape together sufficient money to

\* *Ibid*, p. 53.

See for a description of a pompous royal procession to a pleasure-garden in the "Prākṛit Dhammapada" by Barua & Mitra (q. v.)

† *Ibid*, pp. 222, 258, 275.

spend towards the building of temples, excavation of tanks, digging of wells, planting of trees along the road-side, erection of bridges or the creation of a permanent endowment for some religious charities\*—the various acts of piety advocated by the most catholic Emperor Asoka of old. It is needless to say that the noble gifts made with their ignoble profits never caused any shock to the moral susceptibilities of the best class of people.

Temples at any rate could not throw off its antique traditions of serving as so many safe meeting-places of clandestine lovers and also as nice exhibition-stalls of venal beauty. Whores of every description would visit the shrines each evening to recite their prayers as well as to recruit their preys. Even during the times of Kautilya and Vātsyāyana, the mendicant orders did not enjoy a very high reputation of integrity. The Hindu and Jain religions, too, had by this time, established a sort of monastic order for men and women in imitation of, and in consonance with, Buddhism. But many of these monks and nuns were 'rakes in yellow robes' and their company was deemed unfit to be sought for by decent ladies. The Hindu *Tapasi* and the Jain *Kshapanika* had small cottages or "hermitages" of their own, which sometimes served as the rendezvous for furtive lovers. It was not unlikely that they proved proficient in amatorial affairs and are said to have been occasionally employed to wheedle a harem-lady out of her house or to fish out political secrets. The female ascetics were also largely made use of by the courtesans to carry messages of love to their constituentst.

Prostitutes formed one of the accoutrements of the soldiery even during this age. The concubines and mistresses of the kings and his generals always occupied the centre of a moving army ; others made up the rear rank. Kāmandaka is of opinion that a body of troops which includes a batch of sprightly and healthy women can valiantly fight § ; but in another place, however, he

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\* *Ibid*, p. 340.

† This may partly explain why in the *Vinaya Pitaka* the nuns were prevented from coming in contact with the courtesans.

§ *Kamandakiya Nitisara*, G. Sircar & Raja R. L. Mitra's editions, Ch. XIV, S. 80.

contradicts himself by saying that an army sometimes fares ill owing to the presence of women ( कलत्रगर्भे ) within it\*. This age-old practice showed signs of rapid deterioration from the end of this period till it became well-nigh extinct.

Now we should turn our eyes a little to the other parts of the civilised world and snatch a glimpse into the state of prostitution there. Greece and Rome were, during the age under our consideration, two resplendent stars lighting the course and guiding the destiny of all other nations of Europe, North Africa and the near East. We have already dwelt on the early history of prostitution in Greece, where the hetaira first made her appearance—a prototype of the Indian *ganika*. Philosophers, kings, priests and parishioners all made way before this flaming orb which knew perfectly well how to distribute warmth and create a conflagration. It was in the Island of Lesbos that we see the cradle-bed of so-called “lesbianism” or homo-sexual love between women, and in the Island of Crete where first the reprehensible practice of pederasty was popularised. Greek culture bore marks of ruthless ravages by these savage lusts till her last breath. Even towering geniuses, Aristotle and Socrates not excepted, have been blamed of being victims to that most unnatural, most delirious and most incorrigible passion. The prostitutes and concubines were given the highest latitude in society and their glory was shed over innumerable activities of public life. Any man who aspired to be great, could not make head-way unless he “hitched his chariot to a courtesan’s star.” Thus Plato had Archeanassa, Meneclides had Bacchis, Sophocles had Archippe, Antagoras had Bedion, Crates had Hipparchia, and so on.

During the early republican days of Rome, prostitutes were degraded creatures relegated to a corner of the society. They were beyond the pale of the law for centuries, till in the reign of Augustus, the Julian Law branded them for the first time. About a century later the famous jurisconsult, Ulpianus, clearly defined prostitution with all its filthy accessories. In the twenty-third

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\* *Ibid*, S. 69,

part of his voluminous work, he records under the title *De ritu nuptiarum*: "A woman will be deemed as making a 'public commerce', not only when she actually hires her body in a place of debauchery, but also when she is seen frequenting the drinking-saloon or any other places in which she cannot take proper care of her honour.

"1. By 'public commerce' is understood the trade of those women who prostitute themselves to all comers and without discrimination. Thus this term does not apply to married women who are guilty of adultery nor to maidens who willingly permit themselves to be seduced.

"2. A woman who has given herself for money to one or two persons is not to be regarded as having made a public commerce.

"3. Octavenus rightly holds that she who abandons herself publicly to the man ( of her choice ) even without accepting money should be included in the number of women who make a public commerce ( i. e. of prostitutes)."

Prostitution within the first three centuries of the Christian era assumed so frightful a proportion that its different aspects and degrees had to be distinguished with nicety and recorded in the codes of the jurisprudence. In India we have seen a broad classification of the open and clandestine prostitutes as made by Dattaka ; but Rome made a very exhaustive classifications of them with wonderful punctiliousness, so much so that the slightest venereal aberration did not escape its notice. To quote a few instances, the *quaestus* represented that class of prostitutes who wandered about on the street in quest of clientele, whereas the *scortatio* signified stationary prostitution which never solicited, but waited in the house for customers. *Stuprum* was the commission of the sexual act with a respectable matron, who, if detected, was socially and legally liable ; *fornicatio* was the commission of the act with a woman, not exactly a prostitute, who suffered little prejudice on that account. Again there were different kinds of *lenae* and *lenones* i. e. male and female pimps. In the class *de meretricibus* were included all men and women who kept



assignation-houses in the secluded corners of the city and those tavern-keepers, hostellers, public-bath managers who engaged their domestics in public debauchery for money.

Both Nonius Mercellus, the Roman "Patanjali" and Maccius Plautus, the reformer and comedian, have furnished us with many grades of prostitutes extant in their times. The *alicariae* were baker women with their assistants who sold cakes at the doors of the temples of Venus, Priapus, Isis, etc. These cakes represented in hideous reality the male and female sex-organs. The baker-women prostituted themselves freely with the votaries for a small consideration. There were *flitidae* who plied their vile trade amid the fields, the *bustuariae* who had chosen their pasture on the cemetery and who catered for the mourners and grave-diggers, the *copae* or bar-maids, the *diobolares* or the old hags satisfying themselves with two copper pieces, the *noctilucae* or night-walkers, the *forariae* or foreign women, the *delicata* or the favourite of the rich knights, the *dores* or well-dressed flirts, and what not. Flavia Domitilla whom the Emperor Vespasian married with pride and who became the mother of Titus, had been a *delicata* before she rose on to the high pedestal of an Empress. The *famosae* were semi-clandestine courtezans drawn from the respectable patrician families. After dusk they would visit a public brothel where they had well-furnished rooms rented for their nefarious purpose; "they had no shame in prostituting themselves in the lupanars: some, in order to satisfy a horrible lust, others for purposes of an ignoble gain which they dispensed in sacrifices to their favourite divinities."

The last days of the Roman Republic saw the moral of its citizens turning from bad to worse. The depraved manners of the Romans became the pattern with all other nations within the empire, and their culture left the slimy traces of the coarsest license, like a "slug" with its slaving shell, wherever it has travelled. "Masculine prostitution" thrived side by side with feminine, and it became more ardent, more infectious and more arrant with the progress of time. We have not the heart to descend into the obnoxious details of this subject that has so impudently been broached by Martial, Juvenal, Horace, Catullus and

even Virgil\*. Paul Lecroix observes with reason : "For each class of female prostitutes there was a corresponding class of male prostitutes, there being no difference between the two classes save that of sex.....They were left, in their turpitude, a liberty which bore witness to the indulgence, and even to the favor which legislation accorded them, so long as they were not free-born Roman citizens. They were ordinarily the children of slaves who had been instructed from an early age to an obscene trade". Almost each citizen, no matter how great he was in the estimation of the public eye, had in his house a "seraglio of young slaves, under the eyes of his family, wife and children". Rome during the time of the emperors was filled with these *pueri meritorii* who hired themselves out in the same way as public women from special brothels set up for the purpose, and with panders who had no other ostensible means of livelihood than that of making an indecent competence out of this most hideous commerce †.

The later Romans before they came in close contact with the Christian morals, could boast of merely a handful of Zenobia, Apollonius and Hypatia who on principle maintained a saintly chastity in and outside marriage. Pre-nuptial unchastity of young men, if it was not at all excessive, went uncensored, while the license of the married people was under no circumstances looked upon with disapprobation. Like the average Indian wife, the Roman or Greek wife was a model of modesty, fidelity and piety. While unlimited indulgence was accorded to the husband, the wife had to labour under many rigorous laws and coercive monogamic morality imposed upon them by the 'male' law-givers. Any infraction of the marriage-laws by a wife was met with the highest penalty, though the husband could twist the clauses of the law any way for his own purpose. Fierce resentment was sometimes felt by the Greek and the Roman matrons at the injustice of the laws that punished unchaste wives but not unchaste husbands ; and many a feminine heart was burning with the moot question as to why every honest

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\*Virgil has given a reputed example in his *Corydon* ( Eclogue II ).

† *History of Prostitution* Paul Lecroix (Putnam's translation), Vol. I. pp.540-41.

husband was not contented with one wife just as every honest wife was with one husband\* ! In spite of the rise of Neoplatonic and Pythagorean philosophies which essentially regarded all passions of the body as evils that virtue alone could expunge, the Romans could not reconcile themselves to the moralising influence of any doctrines that stood in the way of fulfilling their carnal desire.

Lascivious songs, mad concordance of the flutes and lyres, pantomimic sports, gladiatorial contests, anomalous revelries, dancing and music of the Syrian, Ionian and Spanish women of pleasure—were all that characterised the social life during the incumbancy of the most of the pagan emperors till the accession of Antonines and Constantine. It is Martial who depicts in glaring brevity the Spanish dance that excited the desires of the most frigid spectators: "Young and lubricious daughters of Cadiz endlessly shake their lascivious loins to skilful vibrations." The Ionic dances which by spasmodic movements of the hips and other parts of the lower limbs imitated with a verisimilous exactitude the consummation of love, were even assiduously learnt by the virgins of respectable families, if we can rely on the authority of Horace. Adultery though sometimes was deprecated, the relations with vile mistresses and concubines was even justified by moralists like Cato the Elder †. Cicero has left us a lasting document in which he adduced a curious argument in defence of a dissolute client, and this will, we think, bespeak the keynote of Roman feelings in regard to profligacy at the time. "If there be any one," he goes on to say, 'who thinks that young men should altogether keep themselves aloof from the love of the courtesans, he must be in fact very severe ; I am not prepared to deny his position, but he differs not only from the license of our age, but also from the established customs and allowances of our forefathers ! When was it not permitted ? When was, what is now lawful, not lawful ? §' Alexander Severus who, of all the emperors,

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\* Plautus, *Mercator*, Act IV, Sc. 5.

† Horace, *Sat.* 1, 2.

§ Verum si quis est qui etiam meretriciis amoribus interdictum juventute putet, est ille quidem valde severus" ...etc.—*Pro Caelio*, Cicero, XX.

was probably the most energetic in legislating against vice, "when appointing a governor, used to provide him with servants and horses, and, if he was unmarried, with a concubine, because, as the historian very gravely observes, 'it was impossible that he could exist without one'."

Religious prostitution came very near preserving its ancient traditions and primitive attractions at Rome, as civil legislation shut its eyes on it. The Egyptian Isis and Osiris had long been absorbed into the Roman pantheon, while Venus, Priapus and Mutinus had been feeding peacefully on the "indecent devotion" of their initiates. During the latter half of the republican rule, the mysterious cult of Bacchus took its origin in the very heart of the Empire capital. It was an orgy, monstrous in nature, celebrated under the name of a secterian creed which drew novitiates from every rank of society,—the courtesans, libertines and women of easy virtue being its staunchest followers. The participants in this frightful celebration, both males and females, met in the night in the temple-compound and after drinking the "sacred" wine from earthen urns in the forms of phallus, and muttering some mystic incantation would come out of their secret retreat, half-naked, with disorderly hair tied round with ivy creepers and vine-leaves. Some of them would disguise themselves as Fauns and mount on asses. They would hoist enormous phallic emblems on the end of thyrsus-wand; they would shake lighted torches over their heads and dance furiously with the vibrating sound of the drums, trumpets, bells and cymbals. Then this delirious band — symbolizing atonce pandemonium and prostitution let loose, would move forward and make a round of the whole city. They would show up any man or woman whom they encountered on the street and would pursue with satanic laughter, mocking cries and obscene gestures. In the early hours of the morning they would return to the temple to enact the epilogue of the immodest conventricle in which "men became women and the women men amid a nameless orgy". Consul Postumius and Consul Cato promulgated a most relentless ordinance against this

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\* *History of European Morals*, Lecky, Vol. p. 315.

Bacchanalian orgy, which for a long time to come remained shorn of all its attractions\*.

The matrons, the wives, the mothers of respectable families to whom the civil and ecclesiastical laws bowed in veneration, tended to forget the austere virtues of their ancestors, under the Emperors. Via Sacra and Via Appia, the two famous promenades of the city of Rome were not only frequented by the *femosae*, *delicata* and other classes of courtesans, but by rich ladies of repute who appeared there with a view to parading the pomp of their toilet and the "choosing of a lover or rather of a vile and shameful paramour". Their senses were awakened often at the sight of a deformed slave or a valet, an impious actor, a dusty mule-driver or an enormous gladiator. The satires of Juvenal and Persius are redundantly filled with the horrible pictures of this "matronly prostitution". Then there were also to be seen young effeminate whose fingers were laden with rings, togas always most scrupulously draped, curly hair elegantly brushed, faces rouged and perfumed—the lads who darted meaning glances from one side to the other in search of their unnatural lovers†.

We need not further expatiate on the Roman immoderation in the age synchronous with Vātsyāyana's; but it may be worth while to cite a few random examples from the pages of history which, we hope, will more than give a finishing touch to the hasty picture we have tried to draw above. The abjectly material and grossly sensual creeds of Roman paganism had gradually dragged the people of South Europe into the whirlpool of an extreme civilisation which knew no other end than the satisfaction of its bubbling egoism; and this egoistic ideal began to be brutally carried into effect in the age of the Cæsars, who were, as it were, its prodigious personifications. Julius Cæsar whose military and administrative genius once made Rome the highest political power in Europe and most noteworthy in the history of the Empire, was perhaps the first great man to instil a goading motive into the Romans for unbridled depravity

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\* *Livy*, XXXIX 8-19; *Smith's Smaller History of Rome*, p. 154.

† M. Walkenaer, *Life of Horace* (q. v.); also vide Juvenal's *Satires*.

by the examples of his own life. All the historians from Plutarch to Dion Cassius are agreeable to this affirmation that J. Caesar spared no pains in defiling the conjugal bed of all the distinguished women of his time, including Servilia, Brutus' mother. Cicero suspected that Servilia also favoured scandalous connection between her own daughter, Tertia and the indomitable object of her putage. He forced many queens and aristocratic ladies of the foreign lands he subjugated, to become victims to his venereal ardour. He wished in the heart of his hearts to enjoy all the handsome women of his vast empire. He has been accused by Cicero and others as giving himself also as a passive agent to unnatural satisfaction. The intrepid orator was positive that he at least prostituted himself with Nicomedes, the king of Bithnia. After this, he is said to have been laden with epithets of the bitterest irony by personages like Curio and Dolabella, such as "concubine of a king", "Merry-Andrew of the royal couch," "husband of all the wives and the wife of all the husbands," "Caesar has conquered the Gauls, Nicomedes has conquered Caesar" etc. He also loved Cleopatra, queen of Egypt, before Mark Antony, with such a relentless passion as she bore him a son\*. The concupiscence of this remarkable lady has left an ineffaceable opprobrium on the pages of history. Not content with the continuous advances of Caesars, Antonies and Ptolemies, she would often visit common brothels at the dead of night under a sobriquet and satisfy herself with as many filthy lewdsters as the few dark hours of the night would permit. On more occasions than one, she bore in quite a sportive spirit the assaults of more than one hundred momentary lovers in the course of a night †.

The first Roman Emperor, Augustus Octavius was an effeminate in his youth and debauch in his manhood. Despite his famous Julian law against prostitution and adultery, he was so indulgent towards himself that Ovid is said to have disgracefully witnessed the incestuous amours of the Emperor with his own

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\* Suetonius, 51.

† Magnus Hirschfeld, *Sexual Pathology* (q.v.).

daughter, Julia \*. If Suetonius is to be believed, the Emperor's friends had to spend a greater part of their time in seeking out for him beautiful matrons and marriageable daughters of high families, who were brought before him in batches completely nude for his scrutinising inspection, one of his wives being alleged to have sometimes played the procuress. This monstrously lewd Emperor, moreover, changed wives as he changed his robes.

His daughter, Julia, a princess and beautiful too, was nothing less than a chip of the old block, and she was often seen to have been prostituting herself at a street-corner in front of a statue of Satyr or under the shadow of a stone-dias. She was married to the Emperor's nephew, Marcellus, at the age of fourteen; but at sixteen she was a widow. She was next wedded to General Agrippa, a favourite of Octavius. After a few years the second husband having died, her hand was for the third and last time given to Tiberius, the half-son of the Emperor. During her maiden-and-widowhood as well as in a state of marriage, Julia gave herself up to not a very few men. But her pregnancy was always marked by a great flood-tide of sexual activity and even parturition proved to have afforded no interruption to her filthy derelictions. Macrobius has brazenly reported that when her friends jocosely asked her as to how her children always took after the father when she had been submitting herself to the caresses of so many lovers, she would laughingly retort, "As a matter of fact, I never take passengers aboard until the ship is loaded (*at enim numquam nisi navi plena tollo vectorem*)†".

Tacitus, Aurelius Victor and Suetonius have given us enough to fill our hearts with abhorrence and disgust on the lives of Tiberius, Caligula, Nero, Otho, Domitian, Heliogabalus and other Roman Emperors who proved themselves by their inconceivable acts of lechery, incest, homosexuality and ingenious cruelties, nothing better than frightful beasts under the human skin. A Nero exchanging blows and billingsgate with the vilest

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\* Dr. W. M. Sanger, *History of Prostitution*. p. 78.

† See "Rebelais" Bk. I, Ch. III etc.

prostitutes of his capital, violating the innocent matrons and vestal virgins, purposely keeping a concubine who resembled his mother in appearance and to crown all, going through a pompous wedding ceremony with a young lad named Sporus, is unrivalled in the social history of the world. It is useless to search among the archives of archeological remains, old coins, classical literature and faded manuscripts of India, for the counterpart of a Domitian bathing himself publicly with the notorious prostitutes of the city and depilating some of his favourites with his own hand at his leisure hours, or of a Commodus outraging the modesty of his sisters and nearest relatives, or of a Heliogabalus delivering the coarsest harangue as the president of a courtesans' assemblage and having styled himself as an Empress, entering into the formalities of a mock marriage with a robust slave named Jerocles\*.

Kinnarā, Pingiyāni or Anulā fades into nothingness beside some of the Roman Princesses, Empresses and Queen-dowagers, who have left on the pages of history indelible records of their lives of horrible incontinence—lives that even Indian courtesans like Sāmā and Sulasā would blush to live. Domitia, Semiamira, the mother of Heliogabalus, and Messalina, the wife of Claudius, are some of the names from the long list that chronology has very painfully preserved. Messalina who had been dragged from the mire of prostitution on to the throne of an Empress and who dared during the life of the Emperor enter publicly into marriage with a freed slave named Silius, has been immortalized in all civilised languages as a synonym for the most shameful and insensible prostitution. Juvenal (in his Satire VI) and Tacitus (in Book XI) have given vivid descriptions, without perhaps the least flourish of poetic fantasy, of the abominably obscene life this prostitute-empress led. Suetonius, the implacable critic of the turpitudes of society in which he lived, relates with a righteous indignation the night-prowls of the insatiable Messalina: "As soon as she believed the Emperor to be asleep, the august courtesan, who dared prefer to the bed of the Caesars the pallet of

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\* See *Abridgment of Xiphilinus*, M. Cousin's translation.



prostitutes would rise up, accompanied by a single servant. Hiding her black hair under a blond wig, she enters a much frequented lupanar, drawing aside the botched curtain ; she takes the cell which is her own : naked, her throat covered with a gilded veil, under the false name of Lysisca inscribed on the door, she exposes the belly which she has brought you, noble Britannicus ! She receives with caressing air, all who enter, and she demands from them her wages ; then couched upon her back, she sustains the efforts of numerous assailants ;.....yet, she still burns with desires which she has merely succeeded in irritating, and fatigued with men, but not satiated, she hides her soiled face, her eyes weak and blackened by the lamp, and carries away with her the odor of the lupanar\*.

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\* Paul Lecroix, *Op. cit*, Vol. I, page 256.

## APPENDIX

### 1. THE SĀDHĀRANYĀS.

[ REF. TO CHAP. I, PAGE 10 ]

Sometime in the early Vedic Age, even when marriage institution with all its successive forms came into being, the habit of promiscuity could not be done away with root and branch from among the Aryan Society. It was for a time permitted in a somewhat restrained manner only on the festival days and on the occasions of the *Yajñas*. But many Rishis of the orthodox type having taken exception even to this amended usage, probably a set of women took rise—thoroughly accomplished and often youthful maidens of respectable parentage—who formally and freely joined in these festivities to entertain the people by their exquisite display of dancing and singing. They were by no means unapproachable to the advances of those spectators that happened to excite their fancy at these times and who could enjoy them only within the boundaries of the festival-ground and during the festive season. It, of course, came to be considered as a part of the religious observance and based on a popular ethical sentiment as we have found in Babylonia. These girls never took any recompense for their labours, were pure amateurs and were likely not amenable to the solicitations of any man after the ceremony was over. These volunteers of ceremonial voluptuousness can be said to be the decrepit remains of a matriarchal society and their intercourse with man was always characterised by a personal liking and a feeling of pious satisfaction, unlike the emotional indifference of the real prostitute. They created, as we suppose, a mysterious halo round themselves and were always held to be attractively pure like the *Kedecoths* or *Kadisthus*. They

are probably referred to as the *Sādhāranya*s in several places of the Rigveda, mostly couched in nice metaphors\*. They can be termed as the pioneers of religious prostitution or the forerunners of the permanent institution of the *Devadāsīs*, both of these originating admittedly in the non-Aryan South. Whatever it may be, the 'Sādhāranya' should in no wise be identified with the *uxor communis* of a later period.

The *Sādhāranya* needs also be differentiated from the *Pumschalī* or *Jara*, who then simply stood for women loving outside marriage and were sometimes seen to be running after young men†. During the Brāhmanic period, new import seems to have been instilled into these three words, 'Sādhāranya' being frequently used to denote the professional prostitute who has by this time been ushered into existence. The *Pumschalī* acquired a more sinister sense during the days of the later Purāṇas‡. If our memory serves us right, the word *Sādhāranya* has nowhere been used in the Epics or the *Puranas*, though *Sādhārana-stri* (lit. 'public woman') and *Sarvasādhārana-stri* were freely used at these times§. The term, *Sādhāranya* which probably persisted in preserving its old connotation, gradually fell into disuse in view of the fact that the class to which it was appropriately applicable, had long made its exit.

\* परा शुभा अयासी यस्या साधारण्येन मरुतो निमिष ॥

—Rigveda, M. I, S. 167, R. 4.

† The *Yajurveda*, XXX, 22 ; The *Atharva-veda*, XV, 2, 1 et. seq.

‡ See *ante*. p. 154.

§ Cf. पयान इव विप्रेन्द्र सर्वसाधारणाः स्त्रियः ।

तस्मात् त्वं नान्ववदीथा नास्तीत्यभवनाच्च च ॥

—*Garhura Purana*, Ch. 114, S. 74.

पद्मानमिव राजेन्द्र सर्वसाधारणाः स्त्रियः ।

तस्मात्तासु न क्षुध्यति न रज्येत रमेत च ॥

—Jasodharendra's Commentary on the *Kamasutra*, I, 9.

[The latter has, however, meant 'all women in general' by the word सर्वसाधारणाः स्त्रियः].

## 2. ŪRVAŚI-PURŪRAVĀ IN THE VEDAS

[ REF. CHAP. VI, PAGE 126 ]

The Urvaśi-Purūravā incident is as old as the *Vedas*. *Rigveda* X, 95 first gave birth to the idea, which *Satapatha Brahmana* has afterwards developed and clarified. The Rigvedic hymn which relates the story, "though obscure in many places and cast in the form of a dialogue, gives a fine lyric expression to the ardent but hopeless pleadings of Purūravas and the somewhat cold, but no less pathetic, rejoinder of Urvaśi. Addressing her as his 'fierce-souled spouse' he implores her to tarry a moment, and they reason together for a while :

"Let the gift brought by my piety approach thee.

Turn thou to me again ; for my heart is troubled ;

To which *la belle dame sans merci* replies :—

What am I to do with this thy saying !

I have gone from thee like the first of mornings,

Purūravas, return thou to thy dwelling.

I, like the wind, am difficult to capture.

"Rebuking her for her inconsistency, Purūravas recalls in vivid language the days of pleasure they have passed together ; but the only consolation which Urvaśi deigns to give him is her promise to send him the son who will be born to them. Even when in despair Purūravas speaks of self-destruction and wants to throw himself from the rocks to the fierce wolves, she only replies :—

"Nay do not die, Purūravas, nor perish :

Let not the evil-omened wolves devour thee.

With women there can be no lasting friendship.

Hearts of hyenas are the hearts of women\*." \*

It should be recalled here in this connection that the tenth *Mandala* of the *Rigveda* in which this story occurs, was invariably the latest in composition, and in earlier times, the conception of a divine hetaira and her marriage with a temporal king did not materialise in the metres of the Vedic Rishis.

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\* *Treatment of Love in Sanskrit Literature*—Prof. S. K. De. M. A. (Cal.), D. Lit. (London), pp. 1-2.

**VAISIKAM (The Courtesan's art).**

[ REF. TO CHAP. IX, PAGE 197 ]

**(Excerpts From Vatsyayana's Kamasutra, Bk. VI, Chs. I-VI)****Fundamental duties of a Courtesan**

The Courtesan derives the pleasures of love as well as earns her livelihood from the paramours. Her seeking men for the sake of love is natural—quite in keeping with other women. The love they show them for the sake of money is but artificial.....They should often pretend uncovetousness in order that the love they simulate may appear as genuine and unselfish. But as money with which she is to maintain her dignity must be earned, she should draw it from the lover by intelligent means.

She should bedeck herself daily with dresses and ornaments, and stand near the door or windows of her house overlooking the public street in such a manner that while visible to the passers-by outside, she will not, at the same time, expose herself entirely to their view. For, they are like articles of merchandise which should no doubt be brought to the public notice, but not to be too much exhibited.

**Friends of a Courtesan**

She should select such people as her friends as can procure lovers for her, prevent them (the lovers) from drifting into another's clutches, save her from all troubles, help her in earning money and will incite none of the lovers to maltreat or molest her. She should get such help from persons mentioned hereunder :—

Police officers ; judges and magistrates ; astrologers ; adventurous people ; heroes ; persons who have received similar training as she ; those that are learning "Kalas" from her ; *Pithamardas*\* ; pimps ; buffoons ; garland-makers ; persons dealing in scents ; liquor-vendors ; washermen ; barbers ; mendicants and

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\* Pandit Iyenger has translated *Pithamarda* as a story-teller ; but according to "Rasa-Manjari", he belongs to a species of gallants who know fully well how to appease a dissatisfied or a hot-headed lady. In his mature age when almost spent, he often acts as a go-between either for love or for money. Story-telling might be his subsidiary occupation or an accessory qualification.

such other persons whose business permits them to enter others' houses and consequently to be of service to her.

### Who can give her Money

A thoroughly independent person ; a person who is in the full bloom of youth ; a rich man ; a person of known profession and sure income ; an officer having a lucrative appointment ; one who has earned money without much difficulty (as in a speculation, a lottery etc) ; one acting in rivalry with another person in love-affairs ; one who has a fixed, continual revenue ; a person who is conceited and boasts of his power of attracting women ; an eunuch (being on policy fond of women's company so as to parade to others the marks of manliness which in fact he does not possess) ; one desirous of being called a "man" (having redundancy of manly qualities) ; one of the two persons possessing almost equal merits, in a spirit of emulation with each other ; a person naturally disposed to be liberal ; one having influence with the king or his minister ; a fatalist (who believes that money decreases only with the frowning of fate and not, at any rate, through enjoyment) ; a person who despises money (and hence spends it lavishly) ; a person who revolts against the commands of his superiors ; a person prominent in the eyes of his own community ; an only son to his father—heir to a vast wealth ; a hypocritical ascetic who secretly cherishes an yearning for women ; a hero ; and a doctor.

### Who can give her Love and Notoriety

One born in a noble family ; a learned man ; a person conversant with all the social sciences ; a poet ; a good story-teller and conversationalist ; an orator ; a ready-wit or a genius having a knowledge of the various arts ; one who esteems, and profits by the wisdom and experience of, the elderly persons ; a large-hearted person ; an enthusiastic person ; one who is unprevaricating in love-matters ; one not envious or vindictive by nature ; one who is much attached to his friends ; one habitually inclined to arrange and actively take part in pilgrimage, sports, social gatherings, musical soirees, dramatic performances, etc ; a

strong and healthy man ; one who is not disabled or diseased in any limb (not deformed, blind, deaf or lame) ; a man of sprightly disposition ; a man not much addicted to drink ; a man capable of effecting sexual intercourse to her full satisfaction ; a sympathetic person who can by proper advice change the habits of a woman ; one who knows how to maintain relations with a woman without prejudice to his or her health.

In short, a man who is of independent profession, not much subservient to women, not given to jealousy or atrocity, not quibbling in his actions, is to be deemed as an ideal lover.

### What a Mistress should possess

She should possess beauty, youth, auspicious signs on her lovely form and, above all, a sweet voice ; should prefer the merits of a person to his capacity of spending money ; be naturally of a loving disposition ; neither weak-minded nor capricious ; be of discriminating nature ; free from avarice ; fond of social gatherings ; and should have a taste for arts and letters (*Kālās*).

### Common qualities of a Lover and a Mistress

Wisdom ; good behaviour ; honesty of purpose ; sense of gratitude ; foresight ; amicable temperament ; knowledge of proper time and place for actions ; refined etiquettes ; freedom from cringing and whining, loud laughter, a tendency to slander or do mischief to others, anger, covetousness in one and miserliness in the other, disobedience (to the elders), fretfulness, and fickle-mindedness ; and, above all, a thorough knowledge of the science of erotics and their relative arts.

### Persons to be shunned by a Courtesan

A consumptive person ; a sickly fellow (specially one infected with leprosy) ; a man whose spermatic fluid fertilises women with disgusting rapidity (*कनिष्कत*) ; a foul-mouthed person (either for his stinking breath or for obscene language) or one who indiscriminately goes in unto all sorts of women like a crow blindly nibbling at all good and bad things ; a person tied to

the apron-strings of his own wife (as he can seldom be won over by other women) ; a person harsh in speech ; a parsimonious fellow ; a cruel, hard-hearted man ; one who is abandoned or dispossessed by his relatives ; a thief ; a haughty, self-sufficient person ; a man who deals in medicinal roots for sinister purposes ; a person who has no discrimination between honour and disgrace ; a person who is accessible even to his enemies for money ; a person who is inordinately shameless.

### Reasons of entertaining a person :

Natural or true love ; fear of life's danger or dire retaliation (from a blustering ruffian, if she does not consent) ; money ; spirit of rivalry ; revenge (as against the man's wife who had once insulted her or against a lover who had neglected her, by taking one of his friends) ; a simple curiosity to test a person noted for his erotic experience and manly power ; a state of dependence (on him) ; her experience of hardship in sexual intercourse with others, (so she prefers this man who proves suitable in that respect) ; charity (by giving herself to a worthy Brāhmin or celebrated monk) ; a desire to earn notoriety (by allowing intercourse on certain prescribed occasions, such as at a sacrificial ceremony, a garden-party etc.) ; compassion (as towards a person who professes that he would court death on her account, if his love remains unreturned) ; request of a friend or a patron (who may say, "A friend of mine has come, would you not entertain him for this night ?") ; bashfulness (when any one for whom she cherishes much respect, breaks open his love to her, she consents being too bashful to resist) ; the man's likeness to her once beloved paramour (or dead husband) ; her conviction that she would be blessed by having connection with a certain high-souled, wealthy and beautiful person ; need for the satisfaction of a suddenly flared-up passion ; the fact that a man belongs to her own caste and have been her co-villager ( in the case of a family-woman gone astray) ; frequent association and consequent familiarity ; will-to-power-and-influence.



### How to entrap a particular Lover

Vātsyāyana is of opinion that only consideration of money, protection from, and prevention of, her troubles and instinctive love, are the determining factors for preferring a man. But the love which she cherishes towards a person should never be detrimental to the cause of *Artha* (money), it being the chief object of her life. Even when solicited by the lover himself, she should not hastily succumb to his wishes, (but prolong the hope for some time), as men generally learn to despise a woman whom they can easily secure\*.

In order to test a prospective lover's sentiments and faithfulness, a courtesan should engage her own trusted servants, the shampooers, the hair-dressers, the musicians, the buffoons etc, or the servants of the lover himself, or in their absence, the *Pithamardas*, to watch his activities and study him thoroughly. From any or all of them she should learn the man's character, the depth of his devotion or attachment to her, liberality etc.. If he seems to be a man worthy of her love, she should send to him an expert pimp conveying through him her loving wishes for the person in question. . . . .

When the lover is come, she should lovingly offer him betel and betel-nuts, flowers, sweet scents, (rose-water, otto, sandal-paste etc) and should entertain him with a private party in which free discussion of the *Kalas* will take place. When he gives evidence of his growing love, she should give him several souvenirs and should exchange with him some tokens of attachment (such as a ring, a scarf, a cravat etc), and should herself in due course signify her desire for sexual intercourse with him.

When the woman has grown somewhat familiar with the novice of a lover, she being backed by the suggestions of the

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\* Compare with this the wise saying of a noted Greek hetaira recorded in the *Letters of Aristenetus* : "It is proper to put a few obstacles in the path of young lovers and not to give them all they ask for. This artifice prevents full satiety, keeps up the desire of a lover for a woman whom he loves, and renders her favour always relishing to him." . . .

Pithamarda etc.,\* and provoking his whole interest on her by the display of all amorous gestures and by loving treatment, should entertain him day after day till he grows dotingly fond of her.

### How to please and keep a Lover.

After she has secured a lover, she should enrapture him by assuming all the duties of a faithful wife, being concerned with him only (if she at all wants to be contented with one at a time). In short, she should so act that he may soon become attached to her, but she must not wholly (or at all) be attached to him, though pretending all the time that she is.

She should be submissive to her mother who is generally a hard-hearted and avaricious woman, or in her absence towards her foster-mother. The mother or the foster-mother should not be too friendly with the man; she should sometimes drag her daughter away by force from before her much frequenting lover (to make her submit to the caresses of a new customer). After each of such incidents the girl will naturally find dissatisfaction of love, feel misery, shame and fear (to return to her former lover who has presumably been displeased or disappointed, and probably left her for the time being); but she should under no circumstances disobey her mother.

But (if on the other hand, she wants to keep herself somehow in the good graces of that man), she should pretend some such nondescript illness of impermanent nature as is neither detestable nor perceivable with the naked eye. If there be a sufficient cause standing in their way, she should also bring it to his notice. In order to show that she cannot go to him herself on account of her illness (and at the same that she has not forgotten him on that score), she should send her servant to him to bring the garlands and remnant of betel-leaves that

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\* Here उपन्यासः occurs in the text, which has been commented upon by Jasodharendra as follows: 'उपन्यासीः पीटनहोदिकतैः। अत्रैव किं न सुप्यत इति।

This has been further amplified by M. Paul, the Bengali translator, by way of showing how the go-between employs his artifices, when a new lover wants to return home after paying his first visit to a prostitute's house. He says congenially to him, "Well, why do you not spend the night here? Why mind you of returning home at this late hour of the night, etc.?"

might have been left after his use, so that these might serve her ostensibly as demulcent medicines.

She should admire the manner of the paramour's sexual intercourse and other amorous preludes. She should also show her eagerness to receive instructions from him in the 64 *Kalās* and try to please him by adopting frequently the various postures in the act of copulation as have been taught by him ; when both are left to themselves, she should gratify him by compliance with all his wishes and tell him that the greatest desire of her life is well-nigh fulfilled.

She should carefully keep from his view her anal region, axilla etc. (last they should excite disgust). When sharing the same bed, if he lies turning away from her, she should not suffer him to remain so ; when he wants to touch her private parts, should yield herself readily to him ; should kiss and embrace him while he is falling asleep.

She should try to humour him further by looking at him steadfastly while he is occupied with other matters ; regarding him significantly from the terrace while he is passing along the street and expressing bashfulness if observed by him ; showing hatred towards his enemies and love to his friends ; expressing joy while he is glad and sorrow in his bereavement ; being anxiously on the look out for whether he is getting attached to any other women ; showing her anger towards him now and then which will only be short-lived ; giving vent to her suspicion about the marks of nail-and-teeth cuts found on his body (as to whether they have been produced by any other women, though they really have been effected by herself.)

The courtesan should not ever and anon be giving utterance to her love to him, but signify the same by timely gestures and behaviour ; but can speak it out openly when in an intoxicated state, during sleep or illness. She should, of course, always give voice to her appreciation of the praiseworthy acts of a lover ; should listen to him attentively when he is speaking, and make a show as if she is devouring his speech ; praising the same by such exclamations as "well said," "hear, hear," etc, and add suitable reply to his speech if necessary ; follow

him closely in his conversation on all subjects other than her rival woman ; when he heaves a long sigh, yawns, slips or falls down, she should express her deep concern as to whether he is hurt thereby or these are the premonitory signs of a disease ; she should neither make any appreciatory remark about another person's accomplishments before him, nor speak ill of a person on account of some such fault as are to be equally found in the present lover ; and should gladly accept whatever he may give her.

When he has inculpated her without proper reason or is afflicted with some sorrow, she should not wear any ornaments, use any emollient on the skin or partake of any food (until and unless called by him to do so). In either case, she should register her mental agony or condolence by means of weeping etc. Under certain circumstances (when her mother is very rude or when there is any other troubles), she should express her willingness to fly from the land with him, and in case she was traced and bound down by the king's officers, she would request him in anticipation to obtain her release by payment of the required security.

She should let him understand that she is thrice blessed and her life prolonged on account of her having secured him as her lover ; should fulfill her vows, said to be previously undertaken, by making offerings to the deities when her man secures any profit, wealth or scores success (in any business-enterprise or gets a lift in the service) or has regained his health after an illness ; she should wear ornaments daily ; should eat sparingly but take nourishing foods.

She should sometimes introduce adroitly in her songs her lover's name and his family ; when she feels fatigued (perhaps on account of the strain of singing), should draw out his hand towards her side and press it against her chest and forehead as if to soothe herself ; then pretend to fall asleep in view of the pleasure derived from the touch of his hand, or she should recline herself on his lap and try to go to sleep there. If the paramour sets out for any place, she should make a gesture to follow him (as if to show that she cannot suffer the pang of even

a moment's separation). She should declare her desire to derive a son by him, and her fervent hope that she may not outlive him.

She should not confer with others in private about things unknown to him ..... She should apparently make no distinction between herself and her lover. She must not attend any social gathering or other parties without him ; should give a show of her complaisance at wearing garlands and other things used by him and eating what is left in the dishes after his meals. She would at times better praise his family, character, skill in the arts, caste, learning, complexion, wealth, country, friends, merits, youthful age and his pleasing conversations.

If he be skillful in music, the woman should urge him to sing songs. She should pay him visits at his house against heavy odds, such as threats (of her mother or some mischievous persons on the way), cold, heat or rain. She should sometimes gravely express her doubts to him that he might have used some philtres to enchant her, (as she will swear, she has never been so much devoted to any other person before).

She will often enter into (false) quarrels with her mother when the latter strongly criticises her actions in getting so much attached to him. If she is led away per force to any other lover by her mother, she must loudly exclaim : "I would rather die by poison, by fasting, by some weapons or by hanging than being thus weaned away from my lover ;" (though at heart she would wish nothing of the kind). At this stage, the middle man should step in to assure the hoodwinked lover that it was no fault of hers, and that the harridan of a mother was responsible for all this fuss, and that she was forced to do it, and so forth. Or she would herself vehemently curse her vile profession (which allows such wicked acts as to make one throw herself into the arms of a man other than that of her own choice) etc. . . . .

The following are the signs of an able lover :—

One who commands absolute confidence, takes delight in earning as well as spending, fulfills her desires and makes good her wants as soon as he comes to know of them, associates with her boldly without fear of others and never lies in wait for anything to come. . . . .

## How to Extract Money from Lovers

There are two ways of deriving money from the lovers : Firstly, by the usual straightforward settlement of her dues (natural means) ; secondly, by resorting to various devices to extract more than the settled sum (unnatural means).....

The following are some of the means by adopting which a courtesan may draw out additional money from her customers, but at the same time would not appear to them to be much too covetous. She should arrange on a particular day to pay her creditors in cash in the presence of her lover (so that he may himself for courtesy's sake offer payment) for the articles she has purchased, such as jewellery, trinkets, various sweetmeats, other victuals from the hotel, liquors, dresses, flowers, betels, spices, scents and crockery. She should with assumed pride eulogise his wealth before her creditors.

The courtesan should create occasions for performing various charitable deeds, such as the observance of a *vrata*, planting trees on the roadside, raising gardens and groves, constructing temples, digging tanks, arranging festivals of gods and making gifts to deserving people. She should make up coloured stories about the seizure of her ornaments and dress by night-prowlers or the street-guards when going to keep her tryst with the lover ; or pretend loss of money and property by a fire in the house or by theft (the thieves making an entrance into her room by boring a hole in the wall\*) or from other accidents (caused by the inadvertence of her mother), or wasting away of ornaments borrowed as well as those given by the lover himself in order to meet the expenses of his merriment.

She may also take a loan to meet expenses on his account and enter into a hot dispute with her mother with regard to the same (as to how the debt could ever be discharged). She should express her unwillingness to attend a festival or a marriage

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\* In the text appears the word कुचच्छिदात् which has been erroneously rendered by Mr. Iyenger as "falling of the wall". But Jasodharendra explains it in this way : चौरैः सन्निच्छादात्तपङ्क्तमिति नाशः । चौरव्यजनैर्वा कुचच्छिदात्तनाशः ।

ceremony in a friend's house on the pretext of her inability to give suitable presents on the occasion. She should, of course, have informed her lover beforehand of the many valuable presents she received from that particular friend when the latter had been invited by her on a certain occasion. Sometime or other she may strike off even the necessary items of her daily expenses so as to evince a deplorable state of her purse.

The courtesan can percolate money from her paramour's pocket on various pretexts ; such as—repairs to the house ; the birthday or christening festival of a friend's child ; giving to a pregnant friend of hers such presents as she naturally desires at the time (दोहद) ; or help her mite towards the cost of treatment of a diseased friend or one in distress, etc. She should make repeated references in a spirit of grateful remembrance to the gifts she has heretofore received at his hands ; should let him know through *Pranidhis* (confidantes) the greater earnings and better fortune of other rival courtesans ; should relate to her professional sisters with a flushed face and, of course, in the presence of her lover, the great benefits she has so long been deriving from him and the presents that are promised by or expected of him in the near future. She can enhance her emolument by "her flat refusal of the offer of her old lovers promising payment of higher sums than they used to pay, taking care that the fact of such refusal is known to her present lover ; and through a middleman, describing before the lover the liberal disposition of his rivals."

### Symptoms of an Indifferent Lover

She should know whether her lover has grown indifferent to her, by daily observing the change in his usual deportment and also from the difference in his facial expressions.

These are some of the salient signs of his growing indifference towards her :—

- (a) Gives her less (than what has been agreed upon) or something quite different from what she has asked for.
- (b) Keeps company with her rivals or enemies.

(c) Does other than what he is asked to do (as for instance, if asked to take a bath, he wants to eat, etc).

(d) Does not give even the small sum which he used to give towards the daily domestic expenses.

(e) Either forgets or disavows his promise, or interprets it otherwise.

(f) Speaks in a cryptic language to his friends (in her presence), so that she may not understand a word of what he says.

(g) Sleeps in other places on the pretext of some business with friends.

(h) Talks in private to the friends or servants of his former mistress in a familiar attitude.

### The Ways of expelling an Undesirable Lover

As to one who has become worthless and at the same time faithless towards her, she should expel him by intelligent means, securing, of course, another lover to fill in his place.

The ways of expelling him are as follows :—

Open means :—such as her association with things or persons detested by him ; exhibiting such behaviour as disliked by him ; protruding her lower lip (in derision and contempt) ; thumping the ground with her feet (to convey her displeasure) ; opening discussion on subjects unfamiliar to him ; expressing very little admiration for the subject in which he is well-versed and rather registering her dislike towards it ; throwing cold water over all his undertakings ; keeping herself surrounded by her friends as much as possible (so that he seldom finds opportunity to address her in private) ; an air of complete nonchalance towards him ; slandering others for faults similar to those found in him (so that he may understand that he is the indirect target of all her invectives) ; shutting herself alone in her room ; etc.

Private means :—such as disinclination to accept drinks, betels etc. from his hand on the eve of amorous acts ; not yielding her mouth for the purpose of kissing ; trying to protect her genitals (so that he may not dally with it) ; protesting against his nail-and-teeth-cuts ; placing her hands in front of her like a couple of pointed pins when he attempts to embrace her ;



holding her body and limbs stiff (so as to prevent him from effecting coition); simulation of sound sleep (when he thinks of setting about sexual intercourse); when he is evidently exhausted, inviting him to a prolonged intercourse; if he is unable to do it (or backs out abruptly in the midst of it), holding him up to ridicule; even if he successfully finishes it, condescending him not a word of compliment; when he is about to express his desire for sexual intercourse at day-time, flitting away to her superiors (so that he may not proceed to badger her there).

### How and When to Reconcile with a Former Lover

Having squeezed her present lover out of all his money, a strumpet should discard him and seek reconciliation with a former lover of hers with whom she had broken, considering if the latter has in the mean time regained some money and still retains his former passion for her. Enquiry should be made as to whether or not the former lover has since formed connection with another woman.

There are six kinds of such lovers as distinguished by the following circumstances :—

1. One who left her of his own accord and after staying with another woman for sometime has left her also at his own sweet will.

2. One who having been expelled from this house stayed thereafter with another woman for sometime, and has been expelled from there also.

3. One who though left her of his own free will, but has been expelled by the woman with whom he kept relations for sometime thereafter.

4. One who left her of his own free will and has found another substitute with whom he is still connected.

5. One who has been expelled from here, but honourably retired from there (i. e. from another woman)\*.

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\* इतो निष्कामितापद्यतस्ततः स्वयमपद्यतः—the translation of this textual line as made by Mr. Iyengar (viz. "one has been expelled from here and has not sought another woman since") is evidently not faithful.

6. One who after being expelled from here has ever since been living with another woman.

Among these, one who left her as well as the other woman (or women) of his own free will, is to be understood as incapable of appreciating the merits of the courtesans and being fickle-minded, is not fit to be reconciled with even if he renews his approaches to her.

In the case of one who has been expelled from both the places (but did not leave one or the other of his own accord), thus proving his firm-mindedness and constancy, or who is known to have been turned out by the other woman (for no fault of his but) for her inordinate avarice and who is righteously indignant at the treatment he has received at the hands of this latter mistress, he is to be deemed as negotiable, if, of course, enough substance is left in him.

There is no good in welcoming a lover who was once cast out owing to his absolute worthlessness and abject parsimony. With regard to one who went away from her of his own free will, but has been expelled from another woman's house for some reason or other, he may be taken in again provided he gives more than what he used to in former days. The man who withdrew from her house of his own accord, and has been staying with another woman, but now seeks reunion with his former mistress, should carefully be scrutinised before reconciliation.

Before a courtesan sets in to reclaim one or the other of her old lovers, she should satisfy herself on one or more of the following points or/and may thus deliberate :—

"This man was expelled by me on account of his offence of paying a visit to another prostitute (बलौकार्थ) and he has since gone to another woman. He (otherwise a desirable paramour), should be carefully brought back. I should all the more encourage him in his approaches to me only for the reason that he would thereby estrange himself from his present mistress or otherwise be shown the door by her in no time. The sooner I can wrest the lover from her, the better, as the wench is bent upon sucking out for herself all the money he has till the last pie.

"I should seek reconciliation because the time of his earning is ripe ; his landed properties and personal worth have since greatly increased ; he has secured a responsible position in the court of justice ; he has since lost his wife ; he has since been free from dependence on others ; he has separated himself from his father and brothers (and is, therefore, under no obligation either to them or to the joint family) ; or by securing this old lover I shall be able to net a certain rich customer who happens to be a bosom friend of this man.

"This man has continually been put to disgrace and ridicule by his wife owing to his former connection with me and his having been ultimately dismissed by me. If he comes back to me, I would rather welcome him so that he may pay his wife back in her own coins.

"A fast friend of this old lover of mine is just patronising a woman who is my staunch enemy and deadly rival ; if I reunite with that man, I may feed fat my old grudge by effecting a disruption between my rival and her patron through him.

"By falling in with the advances of this man who once deserted me, I want to bring home to others his fickleness as a lover."

### Whom to Prefer—an Old or a New Lover ?

When there is a prospect of securing a new lover, and if at the same time, an old lover (in all respects reconcilable) presents himself, the latter is preferable to the former, as his character and the nature of his love to her are already well-known, and as such it is easy to please and be pleased by him. This is the opinion of the older authorities—Dattaka and others. Vātsyāyana is, however, of opinion that an old lover is one from whom all money has been screwed out and who can scarcely give much more again, and (having been once discarded) it is very difficult to regain his confidence. As to the new-comer, he will easily be amenable with all his naive attachment to her. But still nature varies in different men, (so it is better to make a preference according to individual cases).

Discarded lover is sought for, for the purpose of detaching him

from another woman enjoying his favour, or depriving another woman of his attachment or ousting the present (undesirable) lover. A lover much taken to a woman is perpetually in the fear lest other persons should possess her ; he will, nevertheless, be blind to her faults and be making his mistress sumptuous gifts only on the apprehension of losing her.

A courtesan should satisfy an old lover who cannot now give her adequate money (and hence has obliged her to take a more ably paying customer), at heart ignoring the one that gives and loves her much (but whom she does not love in return).

When brokers come to her with varied offers from new customers, she should prefer one whose offer exceeds those of the rest. But she should not all at once dislodge the present lover (who has given her no cause for displeasure except that he cannot give her money enough and is moreover attached to her). She should allow him intercourse at her leisure hours. While maintaining her complaisance for the old lover, she should not reject or break with the present one who pays her most.

If there be a prospect of earning some extra money, she should, after keeping the present patron in good humour, pay the other man a flying visit ; and having received her wages of labour from him, should rejoin and please her permanent lover as usual.

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### Consideration of Different Gains

When there are many lovers hovering round to seek her favours, she has prospect of earning much money every day, and so she should not attach herself permanently to any one person. She should fix a certain reasonable amount as her fees for a single night, of course, after taking the following points into consideration :—

(a) The condition of the country (whether poor or rich) ; (b) the season (when the purse of the farmers, traders, land-lords etc. are comparatively fat or slender) ; (c) the habits of the people (whether they are naturally of a passionate temperament) ; (d) her own worth, accomplishments and relative splendour as compared with other local courtesans.

Sometime (when lovers are not forthcoming of their own accord), she should herself employ professional panders or such persons as are in some way connected with the potential customers.

On receipt of a comparatively large sum, she may engage herself to one and the same person successively for two, three or four nights. During this period, she should confine herself to him alone and should not cast about for other customers. . . . .

When there are offers of equal payment simultaneously from many, she should prefer one whom a friend of hers has recommended, or who presents prospect of visiting her again, or who outshines others in point of greatness, or who excites more infatuation or affection in her than others.

That a liberal-minded person is to be preferred to an ardent lover,—lay down the *Achāryas* (i.e. Dattaka & others). The latter, if he be rich enough, may prove himself liberal ; but the former (no matter whether he loves her or not) is always ready to give away money by nature.

Even a parsimonious person, if he really loves a woman, will certainly unloose his purse-strings. On the contrary, a person though liberal, if unattached, can be made to give by only pleas and importunities,—this view is held by Vātsyāyana.

Then again even among the generous-natured persons, evidently the wealthy man is to preferred to a poor man ; and one who renders valuable help (in her distress) is to be preferred even to the munificent,—says the *Achāryas*. . . . .

Between a grateful person and a liberal person, it is evident that the liberal man is to be preferred,—such is the opinion of the *Achāryas*. But Vātsyāyana asserts in contradiction : A liberal giver though treated all the time with a loving devotion may take amiss a single fault of hers or believe in false accusations made against her by some rival courtesan ; he is apt to forget all that has been done so long by this woman on his account. The liberal people are outspoken, straight-forward and apathetic ; so they do not tolerate the slightest wrong of others and easily put their trust in what others may say. As to the grateful man, he

always remembers the past services of his mistress and does not therefore soon grow indifferent, and being discriminatingly a matter-of-fact man, he does not easily believe the accusations of other courtesans against his mistress. So a grateful man is more desirable than a simply prodigal man. Even of the former, the one that has worth and present prospects must be preferred.

Between a friend (may be a pet lover) and (a stray visitor with) money, evidently the latter is to be preferred—say the *Acharyas*. Here Vātsyāyana adds a dissentient note to the effect that the money offered today can as well be earned tomorrow (by asking the man to turn up again), but as to the friend, he may for ever be lost, if his request be not complied with. So under the situation, a friend should be chosen. But exception may only be made to this rule, when the necessity of money is greater or there is apprehension of losing the lucrative offer for good. In that case, she should first pacify the friend by explaining to him the whole situation (saying, “I shall lose the money offered by this man to night ; I shall be yours to-morrow ; would you not spare me for this night ?”...and so forth), and then she should accept money from the other man.

Between money and the prevention of some imminent danger, money is evidently to be preferred,—the *Acharyas* support this view. But Vātsyāyana is of opinion that money can be measured by a certain face-value (limited and fixed) but a trouble once begun, knows no limit and nobody can prognosticate where it is going to end. The point whether the trouble is negligibly small or of great moment is also to be considered. In the former case, it can easily be remedied otherwise.

Under the following circumstances, a courtesan may accept even a small consideration from her customers :—

(a) When desiring to prevent a lover from going to another woman ; (b) when wishing to detach for herself a lover already attached to another woman ; (c) when wishing to deprive another woman of her profits ; (d) when wishing to command for herself a higher position, greater worth, and attractiveness by her connection with a person of note ; (e) when wishing to secure the man's help against some impending trouble ; (f) when wishing

to give offence to the present lover who, though he stood her in good stead in the past, has become worthless at present (in other words, wishing that he may quit hold of her); or (g) when, infatuated with a man, she wants his love in return.

If she knows that through a certain man she will rise in importance and prestige, and get rid of a grave danger, she should not even press him for any payment at all.

In the following cases she should realise her dues from the customer (either fixed or occasional) then and there (without setting them to the credit of him):—

(a) In case if she understands that the man contemplates to give her the slip and take to another woman; (b) that he is going to return to his wife or to be shortly married; (c) that he has determined to turn over a new leaf; (d) that his immediate superior, his father or guardian is expected to arrive there to chastise him; (e) that he will soon be dispensed with his services in the office, or (f) that he is fickle-minded to all intents and purposes.

### Earning with its Incidental Advantages & Disadvantages

The earning of money by a prostitute is often attended with good or bad consequences, incidental gains or losses and doubt or anxiety.

Untoward results may accrue from several causes such as the following:—

(a) Want of proper discrimination; (b) too much attachment (blind love); (c) too much simplicity; (d) too much pride or conceit; (e) too much keeping up of false appearance; (f) too much credulity; (g) too much petulance; (h) too much carelessness; (i) too much foolhardiness; and above all (j) the decree of fate.

Some of the consequences are:—(1) fruitless wastage of good money; (2) loss of prestige; (3) non-realisation of expected money that was sure; (4) melting away of acquired possessions; (5) infamy; (6) subjection to cruel treatment, such as (a) the cutting of her locks, tying and beating, loss of one or the other of her limbs (nose, ears etc).

Therefore from the very outset, try to avoid all the above causes ; and even if any of them promises plenty of profits for a time, it must be given the go-by. . . . .

If by going in unto a certain worthy person, a woman obtains money as well as prestige and is sought for by others and becomes a centre of universal attraction, then that is a case of *Arthānubandha*, i. e. an earning which brings more money in its train.

If by selling her favours to a certain (common-place) person, she gets no other additional business than the amount paid by him down on the spot, it is called *Niranubandhārtha*, i. e. an earning attended with no subsidiary results.

If she accepts money from an exhausted lover who again secures it from others (by begging, borrowing or stealing), which act is sure to bring aspersions on her and sometime or other drain out her own savings, or if she gives herself to a low-born churl or a known criminal with the same result, it is purely a case of *Anarthānubandhārtha*, i. e. an income resulting in losses.

If even at her own expenses she entertains a hero or an army-officer, a minister or some other influential but stingy government official, apparently without any direct result, but with a view to warding off an imminent catastrophe or counteracting some causes involving the loss of a pot of money, it is an example of *Anartharthānubandha*, i. e. loss of money leading ultimately to gain.

On the other hand, when she spends hard money for the favours of a wretched miser, a pettifogging fellow who always overestimates himself, an ungrateful and unfeeling creature, or a scheming and over-inquisitive man, it is a case of only *Anārtha*, i. e. pure loss of money and energy. . . . .

The followers of Bābhavya interpret the term 'Ubhayato-yogāh' (bilateral gain or loss) in this way : 1. If a courtesan receives a new man, there is gain of money in addition to what is being regularly given by the incumbent lover. The latter pays her adequately without or in spite of her going to a new man. This is *Ubhayato-artha* i, e. gain in both ways. .



2. If the expense incurred towards winning the favour of a certain person (such as a police-officer etc.) yields no practical result, and if, at the same time, because of her failing to entertain her incumbent lover at the proper moment, she runs into an insurmountable risk, then that is *Ubhayato-anartha* or loss in both ways.

3. There is a doubt as to whether or not she would earn sufficient money by attaching herself to a new person, though it involves no preliminary expenses on her part. At the same time there is also a doubt whether her old lover would continue his pecuniary assistance for some time (merely out of attachment to herself) even if she fails to give him sexual connection regularly as usual. This is a case of *Ubhayato-arthasamasyā* (question of gain on both the sides).

4. In the entertainment of a new lover, she is to spend something from her own purse; if she does not favour this man who is indeed very influential, she may make an enemy of him. At the same time there is also a strong doubt whether or not her present lover out of wrath will do her some injury when he finds her in the embraces of a stranger. This is a case of *Ubhayato-anarthasamasyā*, (i. e. a question of loss both ways.) . . . .

Therefore, a courtesan should, after carefully considering all the pros and cons, and consulting with her friends and associates, proceed in cases where there is a large amount of money looming before her eyes, there is a doubt of earning anything or there is a hope of counteracting some colossal mischief. . . . .

A number of clever voluptuaries (विर) keep for their common enjoyment, a single woman (who satisfies each of them successively on a fixed day or days of week or in different parts of the night). This is a case of *Gosthiparigraha*. Here a woman by simulating a greater love for one or the other, should create a rivalry among all of them and make the best of her earing. On the festival days such as *Suvasantaka* (the Holi) etc., her mother should let all the *vītas* understand that her daughter would that day bestow her favours to that man alone who supplies such and such requirements of hers.

If an emulation ensues among them over the exclusive possession of her favours (for a particular night or for all nights of the week), she should carefully weigh the results that may accrue from it. She should deliberate whether there is greater benefit from one or from all, whether there is greater trouble from one or from all, whether money from one means money from the others and whether trouble from one means trouble from the rest ; then she should fix up which attitude she may take to her best advantage. This is called *Samantatoiyogāh*, i. e. earning with good and bad results from all sides. . . .

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## ERRATA

In page	9,	line	1,	Bibāha	should be read as	Vibāha.
"	15,	"	8,	chattels	" " " "	chattel.
"	29,	"	27,	Beshya	" " " "	Veśyā.
"	29,	"	28,	Besh	" " " "	Veś.
"	48,	"	5,	bejewelled	" " " "	bejewelled.
"	49,	"	23,	(Himalayan ?),	" " " "	(extreme south-western).
"	50,	"	3,	horse-sacrifices	" " " "	राजस्य यज्ञ.
"	58,	"	10,	liaison	" " " "	liaison.
"	61,	"	20,	full or	" " " "	full of.
"	62,	"	12,	they were thoroughly	" " " "	their descend- ants were thoroughly.
"	70,	"	19,	Bestiality	" " " "	Bestiality.
"	80,	"	14,	long	" " " "	even
"	89,	"	21,	plebian of	" " " "	plebian mind of
"	91,	"	37,	She	" " " "	They.
"	92,	"	2,	her	" " " "	their.
"	96,	"	36,	Ancient	" " " "	Ancient Indian.
"	106,	"	17,	tha	" " " "	that.
"	107,	"	14,	wordly	" " " "	worldly.
"	109,	"	14,	fifth	" " " "	fourth and third.
"	163,	"	28,	They	" " " "	They.
"	211,	"	18,	slaves-girls	" " " "	slave-girls.
"	221,	"	9,	to the cause	" " " "	to cause.
"	225,	"	33,	nhabited	" " " "	inhabited.
"	233,	"	3,	calsses	" " " "	classes.
"	247,	"	36,	Vol.	" " " "	Vol. II.

[ All diacritical errors and some other minor typographical mistakes  
are purposely omitted. ]





